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Still

Anselmo;

OR,

THE DAY OF TRIAL.

A ROMANCE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

MARY HILL,

AUTHOR OF *THE FOREST OF COMALVA*, &c.

To live with fame,
The gods allow to many ; but to die
With equal lustre, is a blessing Heaven
Selects from all the choicest boons of fate,
And with a sparing hand on few bestows.

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ANSELM O.

CHAP. I.

Live there men who slight immortal Fame?
Who, then, with incense, shall adore our name?
But, mortals, know 'tis still our greatest pride,
To blaze those virtues which the good would hide.
Rise! muses, rise! add all your tuneful breath,
These must not sleep in darkness and in death,
She said: in air the trembling music floats,
And on the winds triumphant swell the notes;
So soft, though high, so loud, and yet so clear,
Even list'ning angels lean from heaven to hear:
To farthest shores, th' ambrosial spirit flies,
Sweet to the world, and grateful to the skies.

TEMPLE OF FAME.

AMIDST the solemn grandeur of the
Appenines, in the year 1689, stood an
ancient gothic castle, defended by strong
VOL. I. B battlements,

battlements, and surrounded with an almost impassable fosse; accessible only by the narrow pass afforded by a massy drawbridge, which, flanked by two turrets, guarding a portcullis, formed a protection in those times of warfare with the neighbouring states, absolutely necessary for the safety of its inhabitants. Here resplendent magnificence maintained her seat, and proudly bade defiance to the invading marauders, who at this period sought to destroy, and to lay waste Italia's fertile plains, and for ever extinguish its pristine glory. This noble edifice being thus secured from the attack of savage banditti, or attempt of the unjust invader of a people's rights, here Peace, with all her attendant train of smiling loves, almost from time immemorial, had been accustomed to reign without alloy; and here, in some parts, uncultivated nature, variegated with agreeable wildness, surrounded the scene; whilst, in others, all the elegancies of human

human art were called in aid, to diversify and to improve its bright original. The long-extended avenues, which contained the beauteous elm, the sycamore, and oriental plane, although they presented a gloomy appearance, were of utility, as their beneficial effects served to shade the castle from the noonday heat, and to greatly heighten its solemnity. Here Pomona, likewise, shed her richest stores, whilst heaven-taught songsters breathed forth melodious strains of joy to their celestial visitor, for diffusing plenty through the land. Through every lawn, beside every grove and enamelled plain, flowed crystal rivulets, embanked with odoriferous shrubs and flowers, to enrich the scene, and to adorn it with inexpressible variety. But the chiefest beauty of this Arcadian landscape, from which science boasts its origin, and decoration its splendour, was a temple erected to the south of the castle, which had, in ancient times, been dedicated to Miner-

va. This superb pile of building rose majestically to the sight, and displayed, amidst this sylvan scene, one of the most valued relics of Roman sculpture. Lofty pillars of the Corinthian order supported the fabric, which consisted of varied sorts of marble, the most beautiful in form and colour. The windows were of painted glass, representing the different parts of heathen mythology. A noble terrace surrounded the dome of the temple, which, gradually rising into a cone, formed a cupola ; it was encircled with gold latticing, and embellished with all the insignia sacred to the goddess to whom the edifice was dedicated.

This domain was the hereditary possession of count Anselmo, the last surviving branch of an illustrious family ; not dignified by birth alone, but from the innumerable acts of heroism, which had been most conspicuously displayed by his ancestors. The dying words of the father to the son were—" Seek not
for

for happiness but at the shrine of glory ! be the champion of your country's honour ! live not for yourself, but for others ! then, when the awful period, in which you now behold your parent, must to yourself arrive, a refulgent light will beam across your soul, scenes of substantial felicity be presented to your view, and your last expiring sigh will be wafted to heaven, the messenger to prepare you for never-failing bliss."

This pious and affecting exhortation sunk deep into the heart of the young Anselmo, who could only reply (interrupted by mental agony, whilst pressing the almost-lifeless hand of his father to his bosom)—“ I will never be the cause of an inglorious stain on our family, on the revered name of Anselmo !”

For eighteen months after the melancholy event took place, the count avoided all society ; sequestered in his paternal mansion, he entirely devoted himself to study, which, although for

the present irksome to his ambitious and enterprising spirit; prepared him the better for those active scenes in which afterwards he was engaged. He possessed a form at once elegant and majestic, commanding the instantaneous respect of every one ; yet not without being joined to some degree of fear, arising from the grave and penetrating cast of his countenance, the expression of which was the herald that announced, without the aid of speech, what passed within his soul. The pursuits usually followed with avidity by young men of his age, and particularly in that adoration to the fair sex which in southern climates is so distinguishable, was always condemned in the strongest terms by Anselmo, as a life of inglorious ease. When rallied by his friends on the subject, he would reply with firmness, that —“ The post of honour should never be deserted for a woman.” His mother died the hour she gave him birth. Anselmo.

selmo was therefore nurtured from infancy under the sole direction of his father, and brought up in the art of war and study of eloquence, Demosthenes being his model; thereby enabling him to shine with equal praise in the senate and in the field. On his arrival at manhood, several matrimonial alliances, highly advantageous, were offered for his acceptance, yet were they invariably rejected by Anselmo.

In the autumn of the year 1690, the count took his departure from the castle of Valleroy, and proceeded to the splendid court of Savoy, by invitation of its illustrious duke, in whose service he was then engaged.

As nothing material occurred to arrest attention, we shall now pass over several years of his residence in that country, during which period the count rose, with the greatest rapidity, to the most distinguished offices in the state, blessed

with fortune, fame, and indeed with the height of human grandeur.

One morning, on his return home from the duke's levee, he was apprized by his servant that a lady, apparently in great affliction, solicited an interview with him, having in her possession a letter which must be personally delivered.

Anselmo, whose thoughts were then agitated with state affairs, replied, "That he could admit no strangers," but directed his secretary, signior Lusignan, to attend on the lady. The servant departed, and shortly after returned with a card, announcing the name of the suppliant as madame de Montauban.

The count hesitated, yet after some minutes of deliberation, again exclaimed "I cannot see her!" when instantly the door of the chamber opened, and signior Lusignan appeared leading in the stranger.

Anselmo started, but on recovering himself,

himself, offered her a chair, and requested she would be seated.

Madame was at that period in her thirtieth year, and although in deep sorrow, she possessed one of the finest countenances in nature ; her interesting form commanded immediate admiration ; and the intelligence of her look and manner, respect and love, from all beholders.

Anselmo, notwithstanding his boasted indifference to the sex in general, could not view unmoved such a combination of charms as were now presented to his sight. The count had often heard mention of the beauty of Almeria de Montauban, but he now observed that it was far above all representation. Her husband, general de Montauban, had been banished, by order of the duke of Savoy, to the island of Sardinia, and imprisoned for more than five years, at the instigation of some secret enemy, who had represented him as hostile to

the existing government; and likewise for being the author of a libel, several copies of which had been found in his possession.

Montauban, therefore, in the dead of night, was torn from the embraces of his family, and conveyed under a strong guard to Sardinia, without even being permitted to impart one word of comfort to his almost distracted wife, whose frantic cries would have pierced the most obdurate heart.

Time, however, the great soother and only remedy for mental anguish, so far recovered the health of the amiable Almeria, as to allow her, after a period of some months, to consign her son Albert, a lovely boy then about twelve years of age, to the care of her brother, signior Orvillé, she having obtained permission of the government to console and comfort poor Montauban in his captivity.

At length, by the active vigilance of the friends of the general, they thought
they

they had discovered the *real writer* of the libel. Montauban, therefore, had now sent his wife to Turin, in order to strengthen the claims which had already been made in favour of him; and to present a petition to the duke of Savoy, for the purpose of soliciting a public trial, that the general might be enabled to clear his character from the false and villanous aspersions which had been passed on it.

Almeria, on her arrival at Turin, was advised, in the first instance, to make a personal application to the count Anselmo, who, at that period, was high in favour with the court party, to sue for his intercession with the duke, on behalf of her husband. For this purpose was the wife of Montauban now exerting all her powers of rhetoric with Anselmo, and well was she endowed by nature for the arduous task. A juster idea cannot be afforded to the mind of the reader of the success that might be expected to

follow her solicitation, than to quote the language of the immortal bard, that

“ In her youth

There is a prone and speechless dialect,

Such as moves men ; besides, she hath a prosp'rous art,

When she would play with reason and discourse ;

And well she can persuade.”

Nor was it then lost on the grave and senatorial Anselmo, who at length promised to become the friend, the advocate of Montauban, whose address to the duke was, at the particular request of the count, read aloud by the weeping Almeria, to the following effect :—

“ MOST HIGH AND ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE,

“ Your faithful and devoted servant, Leontine de Montauban, a woe-ful prisoner in the island of Sardinia, with the utmost submission and reverence to your royal highness's decrees, what-
ever

ever they may be, yet fully relying on the known love of justice which has so conspicuously marked your august reign, I do humbly pray for your highness's clemency. That I am innocent of the heavy charge alledged against me, God is my witness, by whose omnipotence alone, I hope I have been enabled to discover one of the many who no doubt conspired to injure me in my royal master's opinion. The prayer of my petition is, therefore, to be allowed a public trial, by which I may be enabled to clear my own character, to bring to light my unjust accusers, and to prove to the world, that however iniquity may flourish for a while, yet certain dishonour will in the end pursue those who subsist by cruelly inflicting misery on others. I humbly beg leave to sign myself

Your royal highness's

Most faithful and loyal subject,

LEONTINE DE MONTAUBAN.

Done at my prison,

February 28, 1701."

Having

Having read it, she closed the paper, and presented it to Anselmo; and with full confidence in his endeavours being crowned with ultimate success, she departed, expressing at the same time her warmest thanks, and in assuring the count of the gratitude Montauban would ever feel for his benevolence.

The interview Anselmo had just had with Almeria was of that kind the most capable of affecting the human heart. A young and amiable woman, pleading the cause of a husband, on whose happiness or misery, through life, depended that of hers, is certainly accompanied with an almost irresistible claim to our attention and generosity.

Several weeks, however, were passed by madame de Montauban in anxious suspense, respecting the success or failure of her application. Hope, fear, and doubt, had alternately taken possession of her mind; but at the end of a month all anxiety was terminated; for on her
second

second interview with count Anselmo, who had obligingly waited on the fair suppliant, to announce the reply of his sovereign relative to the petition of her husband, he imparted to her the pleasing intelligence of the prayer being granted, with full permission to seek the redress he solicited for.

The sudden change in the countenance of Almeria, from hopeless despondence to the liveliest joy, spoke most forcibly to the feelings of the count, the sincerity of her love for Montauban : he therefore suggested that an immediate courier should be sent off to apprise the general of the result. "Oh, no," replied madame, with peculiar energy, "I will be myself the messenger, the bearer of the happy tidings, as the conviction that every moment that will be leading me nearer to him, may allay much of the inquietude I do even yet suffer on his account. Fears for his health, strange presages of future evil, ever the companion

panion I believe of the unfortunate, continually possess me, and——”——“ My dear madam,” said the count, rising from his seat, and hastily interrupting her, “ I fervently hope, when I have the satisfaction of again seeing you, these forebodings of unhappiness may have given way to the delightful sensation of promising felicity.” After which, with every demonstration of his friendship, Anselmo departed, almost overpowered with her thanks and benedictions.

CHAP. II.

“ Dignity and grace
Adorn his frame, and manly beauty, join'd
With strength Herculean ; on his aspect shines
Sublimest virtue, and desire of fame
Where justice gives the laurel ; in his eye,
The extinguishable spark which fires
The souls of patriots ; while his brow supports
Undaunted valour and contempt of death.”

SUCH was Leontine de Montauban, for whom the count had already professed so great an interest ; not merely at the representation tendered by Almeria, but from having frequently heard the most honourable mention of the general by the officers of his regiment, by whom he
was

was universally beloved and respected. To the parents of Almeria the count had been more than once introduced by his father, the elder Anselmo having been on terms of intimacy with them during their residence in Venice. St. Orvillé, although not in affluent circumstances, had contrived on his small patrimony to educate his son and two daughters, Almeria and Olivia, in all the branches of polite literature. Possessed of every accomplishment, united to great personal charms, and of unblemished character, the family of St. Orvillé had been early received amongst the first circles of fashionable life: they did not court esteem or popularity, but it followed them wherever they went.

Adjoining to their villa, which was remarkable for the beauty of its situation and elegant simplicity, stood the chateau of Montauban, formerly belonging to a French marquis of that name, who had been a resident in Italy for many years.

years. Various conjectures were assigned for the reason of his deserting his native country; the most probable, however, was, that in early life he had formed a tender attachment for a lady, who had for a length of time been betrothed to another, an English nobleman, to whom she was afterwards married. This event, it was supposed, gave the marquis of Montauban a disgust to France, and from having an esteemed friend resident in Italy, to determine him to pass the remainder of his days in that country, where soon after he married a Venetian lady of high birth, and the fruit of that union was the present general de Montauban. The marquis, however, was far from being happy; a *first* love still held the empire o'er his heart; and being of an extreme jealous disposition, he even doubted the legitimacy of his offspring. At length differences grew so high between them, they mutually agreed to separate. The marchioness returned to her nearest relation,

lation, a brother then a resident at Naples, with her infant Leontine, who was rendered, if possible, more dear to her, from the cruel severity it had met with from its father, the marquis having extended the same dislike to his son that he felt for his wife Leonora.

In the space of five years, she was left a portionless widow, her husband at his death having bequeathed his immense fortune to this *friend*, who was the superior of the monastery of Camaldoli. This unjust act, however, did not in the least depress the spirits of the marchioness, all her wants being amply supplied by her brother, count Fernando, with whom she continued to reside, until Leontine had arrived at the age of one-and-twenty. At that period Fate separated them from their endeared relation. The count Fernando, on returning one evening from the church of Notre Dame, in company with his sister and nephew, was assassinated. The villain,

Iain, on plunging his poniard into the breast of the count, exclaimed, "Now my *revenge* is gratified! so *fare you well*." Such was the adroitness with which this diabolical deed was executed, that in one moment the unfortunate Fernando became a lifeless corpse. Montauban called aloud for assistance, and endeavoured to arrest the flight of the murderer; he however eluded all discovery.

To describe the agonized feelings of Leonora on beholding this distressing event, is impossible. A gentleman who was passing at the time assisted Leontine in supporting the lifeless form of his uncle to an adjoining house, where they were instantly admitted by the humane owner; and had every aid administered to the hapless count, but with no effect—*life* was quite extinguished.

The marchioness was inconsolable for his loss; she had tenderly loved Fernando, not merely from his being so closely allied

allied to her, but from the excellent virtues with which the count had been so conspicuously adorned. Montauban, perceiving that his mother continued to indulge, too fatally for her repose, the remembrance of his uncle, strenuously advised her to return to Venice, which city was the residence of the marchioness's late parents, where they had many friends. This request, after much persuasion, she adopted, and Montauban, fearful his mother might regret the assenting to it, lost no time in carrying it into execution. The estates of the count, from his being unmarried, legally descended to his sister, and for which they soon found a purchaser. Leontine and his mother then departed from the melancholy scene, and, on their journey to Venice, they determined to pass several days at Rome.

In this ancient and beautiful city, the curiosity of Montauban, and his ardent desire of procuring classical information, was

was amply gratified. As the carriage rolled under the triumphal arch, erected in honour of Titus, and on which is represented, in basso-relievo, the emperor in a car drawn by four horses, returning from his brilliant victories over the Jews in Jerusalem, Montauban exclaimed with rapture, "Oh mother, such noble deeds as there inscribed make me ashamed of the inglorious life I lead—I can no longer remain inactive, when my country requires assistance—do but suffer me to enter the lists of Fame, and your son will endeavour to imitate the transcendant qualities of a Titus!"

The leading trait in the character of the marchioness was ambition; this ardour of her son, therefore, to commence a military life, met with no opposition. With what pleasure then did Leontine visit the monumental records of those departed heroes, who by their achievements had once rendered Rome the first city in the world! The temples, the theatres,

atres, and the mutilated remains of stately palaces, which had formerly been adorned with all the luxurious refinements of the East, alike engaged his attention. "In these edifices," he exclaimed, "I feel the Roman spirit rise within me; here the conquerors held their councils, under these roofs once flourished, with godlike greatness, a Cæsar! a Constantine! here, too, a Cicero, with all-subduing eloquence, beyond even the conception of our days, declaimed for virtue's cause, in the presence of thousands of his countrymen, and whose approbation of any design projected by the warriors was thought equivalent to an army!"

The noble palace of the Vatican did not fail likewise to draw forth the admiration of Leontine, which for its magnificence, the great variety of apartments that it contains, and its extensive library, filled with the most valuable books, and rarest manuscripts, is justly
estimated

estimated as the first princely residence in Europe. From the gallery of the Vatican, communicating with chateau St. Ange, they proceeded to view that fortress; and on returning from thence to their hotel, an incident occurred which chased away, for the present, all Montauban's ideas of glory. Signior Orvillé, with his two daughters, were then on a visit to a relation at Rome; he was passing near the Vatican at the time the marchioness's carriage drew up to the gates of the palace to receive them; and having been on terms of friendship with the marquis of Montauban, he addressed himself to her by name, and paid his respects. St. Orvillé was instantly recognised by the marchioness, who, on account of his having been one of the executors of her late husband's effects, was therefore received with much pleasure, and invited to spend the evening with them at their hotel.

Signior Orvillé was true to his ap-

pointment; and on his being introduced by the marchioness to Leontine, he presented to the latter a sealed packet, but with this injunction, that Montauban was not to inspect its contents until his departure. Orvillé likewise related much useful information during this visit to his mother, and dwelt particularly on the injustice of the will of the marquis de Montauban, which he thought had nevertheless been illegally executed, no person having signed it, except the advocate and the monk of Camaldoli, into whose hands the whole of the fortune had devolved. The marchioness, in answer, said she grieved only for her son, who, in being thus deprived of his inheritance, was prevented from acting with the munificence his heart would otherwise have dictated—"Leontine, however," she continued, "proposes to enter into the army, where I have no doubt his merits will be justly rewarded by his country. To-morrow we propose again
commencing

commencing our journey towards Venice; if you have any commands, therefore, for that place, signior, we shall be happy to execute them."

St. Orvillé, on returning thanks for her politeness, said he had a trifling commission with which he would trouble her. He then obtained leave to wait on the marchioness the succeeding morning, and departed.

The packet was now immediately unsealed by Leontine, to satisfy his curiosity. Great was the astonishment of Montauban and his mother in perusing its contents. The late marquis, from the partiality he entertained for the family of St. Orvillé, and to remunerate for the trouble of his being an executor, had left him as a legacy the chateau de Montauban, to be disposed of as he thought proper. It was yet in the possession of signior Orvillé, but inhabited only by the domestics of its late master. This just Venetian had always determined

on restoring the estate to its lawful heir, if he should survive the attainment of twenty-one years of age. That period was now arrived ; St. Orvillé learnt that the son of his friend was living, and a resident with his mother at Naples ; the object, therefore, of his present journey (if he had not met with him thus by accident at Rome) was for that purpose. The packet presented to Leontine de Montauban, whom Orvillé addressed by the title of marquis, was the assignment of the estate in question, with an apology for having so long retained it, but which St. Orvillé expressed to be from the apprehension, that during his minority, it might have been wrested from him, by the consummate art and treachery of the monk of Camaldoli.

The gratitude of the marchioness and her son, at this unbounded generosity of signior Orvillé, who was to them almost a stranger, is inexpressible.

Leontine instantly flew to the residence

dence of his benefactor; and on inquiring for him, was answered by the servant, that St. Orvillé was not within, but that his eldest daughter would receive any message he had to deliver. Montauban, therefore, sent up his name to signora Orvillé; and on being ushered by the domestic into an apartment, he beheld Almeria, who appeared to him as a divinity. The overflowings of a grateful heart deprived him of the power of utterance.

The unstudied graces of her deportment, the beauty, the dignity of her form, and the sweet complaisance with which she received Montauban, all conspired to heighten the fascination with which he was already enchained. He would have spoken, but could not; and this painful silence was as distressing to Almeria as to himself. The entrance, however, of signior Orvillé relieved them from their mutual embarrassment.

To relate the gratitude of the one for

a benefit received, or the joy of the other in having it in his power to bestow happiness on a deserving character, would be superfluous. The language of the heart, in the first instance, and the eloquent looks which accompanied it, spoke the obligation which St. Orvillé had conferred with more sincerity than the parade of words usually adopted on such occasions.

Leontine, whose heart had received a deep impression in favour of Almeria, at the same time that he acknowledged the munificence of the Venetian, declined accepting it, without St. Orvillé would tender him the permission to pay his addresses to his incomparable daughter, that she might be a partaker of the splendour which awaited him. This proposal was not rejected, and in the space of three months, signora St. Orvillé became marchioness de Montauban. Leontine then took possession of his father's castle: his mother, at the particular

lar request of Almeria, still continuing to reside with them, in the enjoyment of every felicity.

The first abatement to the happiness of the young marchioness was her husband's determination of entering into the Piedmontese army; and as she resolutely persisted in her intention of accompanying him through the perilous scenes of warfare, Almeria was obliged to separate herself from her son Albert, then about seven years of age, leaving him under the care of his grandmother. In a very few years the marquis rose by his merits to the rank of general; and prosperity and honour seemed to smile with benignant influence on the house of Montauban. The olive branch of peace again waved over his native land, and the hero was returning to his paternal mansion, in the hopes of passing the remainder of his life in tranquillity. Mark the reverse—scarcely had the ge-

neral concluded on visiting his domains, ere he found himself a prisoner, deprived of his title and his fortune; all being confiscated to the government of Piedmont; and from the violence of the faction, which had so undeservedly risen against him, he was dragged to the loathsome prison of Oristagni, in the island of Sardinia. The hapless fate of Montauban proved a death-stroke to his aged mother, who only survived two days after that distressing event. During his imprisonment, accumulated evils awaited this unfortunate family: the mournful news arrived to Leontine and Almeria of the death of the humane, the generous, and noble-minded Venetian, St. Orvillé. In accompanying his youngest daughter and her husband over to England, on the very morning the vessel hove in sight of Britain, prompted by his humanity to save a female passenger, who had fallen overboard, poor St. Orvillé,

villé, although his endeavours proved successful in rescuing the lady, he fell a sacrifice to his exertions.

To meliorate, however, the grief of the mourners, the brother of Almeria had been actively engaged in their service, in attempting to trace out the writer of the libel; which having, in some degree, succeeded, it was by his advice that she was now in Turin, where every thing appeared to promise a successful issue. Not a day, not an hour, was then lost by Almeria, in the endeavour of releasing her husband from his unjust captivity.

CHAP. III.

When I approach

Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
And in herself complete; so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; wisdom, in discourse with her,
Loses, discountenanc'd, and like folly shews;
Authority and reason on her wait
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally; and to consummate all—
Greatness of mind, and nobleness, their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelic plac'd. MILTON.

IMMEDIATELY after that count Anselmo had informed Almeria of the success attendant on her mission, she commenced

menced her journey to Leghorn, for the purpose of embarking for Sardinia. The grand and sublime scenes which every where presented themselves, to arrest the attention and amuse the eye of a traveller, were beheld, however, with perfect indifference by madame de Montauban, whose thoughts being so incessantly occupied on the completion of her journey, rendered her regardless of every other object. The slowness with which they were obliged to proceed through the mountainous region of the Apennines but ill-accorded with her present temper of mind. On arriving at Leghorn, and when the vessel in which she had embarked was approaching the shores of Sardinia, and the ancient towers of Oristagni appeared rising majestically to the sight, her agitation became so excessive, as to excite fear in the minds of her attendants that delirium would be the fatal consequence.

In the evening of the third day, the

vessel anchored in the cape of Cagliari; but on the passengers preparing to land, they had the misfortune to hear that an epidemic fever raged with great violence in the town and its environs: none, therefore, would venture to go on shore, excepting madame de Montauban, who, on offering an ample recompence, and pointing out to the sailors that her destination was not at Cagliari, but the castle of Oristagni, they consented to the proposal.

In less than an hour, Almeria, the general's old faithful servant Claude, and a female domestic, who had attended their mistress to Savoy, were safely landed near the eastern turret of Oristagni. On approaching the castle, they found the drawbridge let down, and only one centinel on duty. Fears for his master now pervaded the breast of poor Claude, at not observing the usual number of soldiers which had been accustomed to guard the prison. Madame de Montauban

auban perceiving the alarm of her servant, and supposing it to arise from this circumstance, with a fixed look of unusual sternness, exclaimed—"Why do you tremble, man? Of what are you afraid? Shame upon you!" continued Almeria, "must you be taught fortitude from a woman?" When, with a motion of her hand, as if to prevent his following, she slowly approached the centinel, announced to him her name, and from the written paper presented to her by the count Anselmo, was permitted to pass the drawbridge.

Claude, who had hitherto proceeded by the side of his mistress in silence, now ventured to entreat he, might be suffered to enter the castle first, thinking, from its deserted appearance, that his master had really been conveyed to some other abode on account of the fever. Almeria uttered no reply; and Claude, therefore, hastened onwards, and rang the bell.

The portal was opened by a man apparently

parently intoxicated, and the inquiry for general de Montauban was answered by —“ Walk in, and you may see him.”

Torrents of the finest eloquence could not produce more effect than this simple sentence did on the long-harassed mind of Almeria; to her it seemed as a transition from earth to heaven: but when, as they were proceeding with their conductor through the long aisles and vaulted passages which led to the prison-chamber of Montauban, and saw nor heard even the sound of any human being besides themselves, horror succeeded to chase away that momentary idea of happiness. They had now arrived at the entrance of those apartments in which, for several years, had been voluntarily confined the lovely Almeria, from the pleasure she took in performing those duties which so highly exalts the character of a woman.

The man unchained the door and withdrew. Madame immediately rushed
into

into the chamber, but on not seeing Montauban, exclaimed, whilst looking wildly round, "What have you done with him? where is my Leontine?" She then ran through the various rooms, calling out for him in accents of the most despairing anguish. Claude observing his mistress in such a melancholy state, and dreading that worse consequences would ensue, left her to the care of Lauretta, whilst he went in search of assistance, and to learn what had been the fate of his master.

But too soon were all his fears realized. In an adjoining apartment he heard the sound of several voices, and shortly afterwards came out the man who had admitted them into the castle, followed by another of superior appearance, to whom Claude addressed, by an inquiry for general de Montauban. The stranger, with much apparent concern, then informed him, that the disorder which had been so fatal to many of his comrades

comrades had proved likewise so to their late prisoner, who had fallen a victim to it only five days before their arrival.

The distress of poor Claude at this melancholy intelligence may be more easily imagined than described. Formerly, he had braved misfortune's sharpest quiver; but now he was old and infirm, and therefore less able to withstand the shocks of adversity. The stranger (who announced his name to be that of Aubine, and of having been lately invested with the command of the castle,) perceiving the embarrassment of Claude, offered his services, and likewise advised him not to acquaint his mistress, at present, of the unhappy event; but to state, that the general having received prior orders to set off immediately to Savoy, he had taken his departure a short time since for the capital. Claude being perfectly ignorant in what manner to proceed for the best, readily took the advice of signior Aubine, as that persuasion too, he
thought,

thought, would most probably induce madame de Montauban to return to her friends, who could better impart the sad event, and afford consolation for the loss she had suffered.

Such an arrangement became more practicable, when, on returning to the apartment, he found her quite composed, seated near the window, and employed in writing on a small piece of paper with a pencil. She looked at Claude on his approaching her, sighed deeply, and said—"I am going to send this letter to your master. I should have wished to have seen him, but I suppose Leontine will not permit it;" and continued, whilst folding up the paper, "to-morrow, therefore, I shall go home again to my little boy, for I am sure *he* will be glad to see me." This turn of mind was favourable to the intention of Claude's prevailing on his mistress to leave the prison; who, from so plausible
a story,

a story, did readily accede to his proposition.

With much facility, Aubine then procured a vessel to convey the unfortunate Almeria and her attendants from this scene of misery. On the ensuing morning, therefore, after Claude had visited the adjoining chapel, where the remains of his ill-fated master were deposited, and over his grave had breathed a prayer for his future and endless felicity, madame de Montauban, Claude, and Lauretta, embarked once again for their native country.

Before the narrative is resumed, we must beg leave to pause, and here to draw the reader's attention to the incident just recorded, which has pourtrayed the mutability of all earthly enjoyments; and by which is deeply inculcated the propriety, nay absolute necessity, of its being impressed on the mind to endeavour to meet the various events of life's occurrences,

occurrences, whether of joy or of sorrow, with due composure, and with perfect resignation to the will and pleasure of Omnipotence; the extremes of either being equally detrimental to the health, as well as the content, of every individual—content is said, for real happiness ought not, must not be expected here on earth. This, a term or word, most pleasing to the ear, and flattering to the imagination, why should it be indulged, since it is but the phantom of the moment, and in existence has no reality? If any name, under misfortune—if any subject calls forth our pity more than another, it is that in which are observed the calamitous, the dire effects of a secret and powerful enemy; where, by the contrivance of one solitary person, a whole family, flourishing in the sunshine of popular favour; beloved, esteemed, respected, and adored, by all around; who, for their patriotism, well-meriting their country's gratitude,

titude, shall, from unseen means, the dark designs, and hidden machinations, of one being in human form, but in heart a demon, be levelled with the dust; cut down like the lofty beautiful tree (by the hand of the hewer), whose inviting and wide-spreading branches had oft served for grateful shelter to many a way-worn traveller, faint and weary with the mid-day sun. So fallen, then, was the once-respected, honourable house of Montauban, whose hospitable relief the distressed, of whatever denomination, received, and whose real goodness ranked it amongst the highest of the Italian realm.

In following the history of the valuable relic of that name, Providence destined that Almeria should once again be landed in safety on her native shores. For many months, however, an almost total insensibility succeeded the information of the death of her husband. She retired to a small villa near Savona, be-
longing

longing to her brother, St. Orvillé, who at that period held a lucrative situation under the Genoese government; and her son, having attained his sixteenth year, was soon afterwards sent by his uncle to Florence, for the purpose of completing his education.

The tranquillity of the country, aided by the comforts of religion, at length restored, in some degree, the afflicted mind of Almeria; who, in the second year of her residence in Italy, was enabled to accompany her brother to Florence, for the pleasure of seeing Albert, whose amiable disposition, and intelligence of look and manner, was all the fondest mother could have wished for, as a presage and early promise of his arriving at future wished-for excellence.

At this period, count Anselmo, being on a visit in that city to a Florentine nobleman, and having learnt by accident that madame de Montauban was likewise there, he immediately hastened to the
hotel

hotel where they resided, to pay his respects to them. Anselmo had ever since Almeria's interview with him at Turin been particular in shewing her every attention. He had written several letters of condolence to her; but on account of the profound melancholy into which she had fallen, they were always answered in the most respectful terms by St. Orvillé.

If the assertion of a celebrated English poet be true, that we shall, at one time or other, all feel the passion of love, and that

“ *All once the pleasing pain must prove—
The fond emotions of distracting love;*”

the reader will not be surprised that Anselmo, notwithstanding his vaunted determination of for ever contemning that power, should now feel it for the beautiful Almeria, whose personal charms were indeed her least perfection. The count had arrived at the summit of his wishes,

wishes, the height of glory and renown; Happiness was far from being an inmate in his breast; he pursued her, but still she avoided him. The thoughts of Anselmo then turned to woman, supposing her the presiding deity of that enviable sanctuary—the temple of felicity; cherishing that idea in his mind, it became at length certain conviction, that without woman, and that woman an Almeria, he should be for ever miserable. To enumerate the various devices of Anselmo, by which he hoped to obtain the heart of her who had with magic power so long held his in adamant chains, would be endless. None, however, tended so much to the completion of his wishes as the gratitude Almeria felt for his former kindness; shewn, too, at a period when the rest of the world (from the misfortunes of her husband) had forsaken her. The friendship of Anselmo, therefore, at such a time, appeared invaluable. For so inconsistent is the mind

mind of man, that too often they pay adoration, and bestow their kindness, to those alone who are already favoured by fortune, although it does not prove of the least benefit to themselves; indeed the reverse is sometimes felt to be the consequence.

The visit of count Anselmo to madame de Montauban, at Florence, raised him yet more in her estimation; his conversation was at times pathetic, and even solemn, whilst, in a most respectful manner, he praised her exemplary character, and the warm interest he should always take (observing how much her happiness depended on it,) in the welfare of her son. Suffice to say, that by such promises, constant assiduity, and trifling acts of friendship, Anselmo effected more in a few months than some men would have accomplished in years—he obtained the hand of the beautiful Almeria. St. Orvillé had tried to dissuade the count from pressing his

his suit until the mind of his sister should be more at ease ; but in vain : for she having referred him to her brother, as being determined not to acquiesce without his consent, Anselmo's irresistible powers of eloquence overruled all his objections. He stated likewise to St. Orvillé, that it was his intention of retiring with her to the castle of Valleroy ; to mix no longer in the affairs of government, as his health, as well as Almeria's, required repose, and the comforts of a domestic life.

Finding that the completion of the count's wishes rested only with him, he gave his consent to their union, and shortly after they were married, in a private manner, (according to the request of Almeria,) at Florence. The count and countess then took an affectionate leave of St. Orvillé, left Albert for the finishing of his education, and then set off with their attendants for Valleroy. Lauretta accompanied them ;

but poor Claude, who by no means approved of the second marriage of his mistress, had expressed a desire to be taken into the service of her brother; which being agreed to, on the same day that the count and countess commenced their journey to the Apennines, he and his master took their departure for Genoa.

 CHAP. IV.

E quella á i fiori, á i pomi, e á la verzura

Gli ador diversi depredando giva,

E de tutti facera una mistura

Che di suavita á l' alma notriva.

ANOSTRO.

THE delightful season of an Italian spring was now beginning to throw its lustre, and to reanimate all Nature's works. The country displayed one continual scene of rich cultivation; woods, mountains, lakes, and silver streams, intermingling through the verdant plains, shaded by trees of elm, almond, and mulberry, and intersected with vineyards, were at once presented to the eye, to charm and diversify the landscape. As

the count and countess proceeded nearer to their destination, the melancholy of Almeria appeared to increase; in her mind, confused and agonizing thoughts were constantly recurring. The late events that had taken place, during her short residence in Florence, and which had so indelibly fixed her future destiny, seemed as a dream out of which she was fearful of being awaked. When the carriage began to ascend the lofty mountains of the Apennines, and the country, hitherto glowing with luxuriant beauty, now changed to a barren uncultivated waste, all dreary and forlorn, Almeria, no longer able to command her feelings, burst into a flood of tears. The count, whose discontented brow shewed too well the displeasure he felt at her behaviour, desired the postillions to stop, and leaving Lauretta with the countess, alighted, and proceeded to walk onwards to the castle.

The poor girl endeavoured to console
the

the agitated spirits of her mistress, by saying she was sure the count Anselmo loved her, and therefore, although the situation did not seem the most pleasant in the world, "yet, my lady," she continued, "you know where love dwells, it always turns a prison into a palace."

This artless speech of Lauretta's had not the effect, however, of calming the troubled mind of Almeria, who continued to weep until the carriage had arrived at Valleroy. Anselmo then came to conduct her into the chateau, observing, as she alighted, and taking her hand, that he hoped discontented and gloomy thoughts would never again obtrude, to chase away the happiness she might now enjoy. With a faint smile, Almeria answered—"I hope not, my lord."

The count then proceeded to lead her through the spacious hall, into a saloon, which, for grandeur and magnificence, excelled every state of an eastern prince,

or the most wonderful productions the beholder could form in his imagination. The ceiling was painted to represent the deities of the heathen world, encircled with garlands of flowers, and from which suspended elegant girandoles, doubly reflected by the pannels of Venetian looking-glass that surrounded the apartment ; the chairs and sofas were of burnished gold, with vases of the same for flowers and odoriferous perfumes ; the carpet of tapestry, and of the most exquisite texture ; two cabinets of ivory, inlaid with precious stones, were placed in niches, and which held refreshments of the choicest wines and fruits ; rich curtains, composed of silk and gold tissue, tastefully decorated the windows, from which was beheld a garden blooming with all the productions of Flora ; and beyond that the view was terminated by stupendous mountains, whose tops, covered with snow, formed a striking

ing

ing contrast to the luxuries that were so profusely displayed in the castle of Valleroy.

They partook of an elegant collation which was prepared for them; and after it was finished, the count, as was his usual custom, retired for some hours to his library, leaving Almeria to the care of her servant. Lauretta, although so new an inmate of the chateau, had learnt an infinite quantity of news to impart to her mistress, but which, on perceiving the countess inclined to sleep, she was obliged to delay the information. With great care, then, Lauretta threw a veil over Almeria, to prevent the light from disturbing her repose; and anxious to hear more of the history of the castle, she softly glided out of the apartment.

The sun, now sinking far into the western ocean, tinged, with its setting rays, the ancient towers of Valleroy; and the evening zephyr, gently sighing in the adjacent grove, wafted a cool and refresh-

ing breeze, to revive the languor felt from the noonday heat; the lovely star of eve, glimmering in the blue ethereal, began to lead the silent host of heaven along; and soon the silver queen of night rose majestically in the vaulted sphere, and darted its milder radiance on the still-sleeping Almeria. Lights were now brought into the saloon, and the count shortly after entered the apartment. Yet Almeria slept. A dream (the strange incomprehensible attendants of the human mind,) had conveyed her far distant from her princely residence, even into the prison of Oristagni, and in which Montauban appeared to view, pale, wan, and torn with agony, as on that fatal hour she parted from him. Once again did she receive his last embrace, and once again did he repeat the words he had uttered with such fervency of—"Oh! Almeria, if success attends not your suit, return, oh! return to me; hasten to cheer the afflicted

afflicted spirits of your Leontine, who only lives for you—my boy too! my soul's comfort, dearest Albert—oh, impart to him, with this kiss, his father's blessing!" Then did she reply aloud—"Montauban! my heart breaks to leave you!"—when a sudden ejaculation from the count, of no very pleasing import, chased away the delusive phantom, and Almeria awoke to the sad reality. She started from her couch, and looking stedfastly at Anselmo, (which seemed to imply at first that recollection had not yet come to her aid, but that she conceived him to be Montauban,) and then by her exclamation of "Where is he?" that she had lost him, Anselmo angrily demanded who she meant? This second question recalled her bewildered senses. Almeria sighed heavily, and taking her handkerchief to conceal the tears which had involuntarily flowed, replied, "Pardon me, my lord; fatigued and listless, from the excessive

heat of the day, I fell asleep, and have had an unpleasant dream ; I could not, therefore, instantly recover the fright it had occasioned me." The countess then, with much ingenuousness, related to him the visionary scene, which had so greatly affected her. Anselmo was silent ; turning over the leaves of a book which lay on the table, he began to peruse the following lines—

“ Why all this toil, for triumphs of an hour ?

What though we wade in wealth, or soar in fame ?

Earth's *highest* station ends in ‘ here he lies,’

And ‘ dust to dust’ concludes the noblest song.”

Reading, however, had lost its wonted charms to Anselmo : he laid down the volume, and continued for some time apparently in deep thought ; when the countess, supposing (although unconsciously) that she had offended, took up her lute, and began playing a Venetian air, in so enchanting a style, that it recalled the count from his reverie, and
the

the unusual gloom which had spread over his countenance.

Two years then passed away, without any material occurrence at the castle deserving attention. The calm and obscure way of life led by Almeria, restored, in some degree, her mental sufferings: at the end of the third summer of her residence in the province of Tuscany, she obtained permission of the count to invite Albert and her brother to spend a few weeks with them at Valeroy.

During their stay, which by the request of Anselmo was prolonged from the period they intended for their departure, the health of the countess daily improved; her heart dilated with pleasure in the society of Albert and St. Orvillé, whose mild and benevolent disposition softened the asperity which at times was observable in the count's behaviour to Almeria, occasioned by her too ardent attachment

(as he called it) for her son. Anselmo's arguments on that subject were, that such partial fondness of a mother must tend to make a boy effeminate, ridiculous, and unfit for the service of his country, in which he thought Albert ought to be now actively engaged. The count would then contend with his wife, that the study of the schools and their disquisitions only rendered men sceptics, argumentative, and assuming: vain braggarts of the quantity of learned nonsense with which their heads were supplied with, they passed their time in composing amatory odes and sonnets to their mistresses; describing passions, never existing, perhaps, but in their own wild imaginations, and obtained from books; thereby picturing human life exactly contrary to what it really is—"Instead, I say, of such trivial girlish employments," continued Anselmo, "would they perfect themselves in more
noble

noble attainments, they might become useful members to society, and acquire lasting honour and renown."

Hopes of renown, however, in the general acceptation of the phrase, for Albert, had ever been far from the wishes of his mother; she had too fatally experienced the fallaciousness of such hopes, in the misfortunes which had attended his brave father—"Montauban," said she, "had nobly fought, risked all, for the public good, his life, his fortune, and every thing that was most dear to him on earth. He acquired renown; yes," continued Almeria, her spirit rising as she spoke, "Fame rose him to her highest pinnacle; when, in an unlooked-for hour, the moment of enjoyment from his hard-earned labours, the canker-worm of envy, jealous of his deserved happiness, despoiled him of his good name, his liberty, and every worldly comfort; nor yet, perhaps, would have been glutted with its vengeance, had not
Death,

Death, the iron hand of Death, tore him from her fangs; and his noble spirit, once again free, flew for ever to the realms of bliss. Oh, my lord," continued the agitated mother, "do not then persuade my son to follow his poor father's fortunes; sooner would I behold him tending in the fields his little flock, and his only residence a neat herd's cottage, than see him master of a palace, where, too oft, the fiends of Care and Discord reign."

Such being the animated sentiments of the countess, Anselmo forbore, for the present, urging his proposition concerning the young Montauban, who was likewise a warm advocate for a military life.

These unpleasant contests St. Orvillé could not always conciliate with the same effect, particularly when he found that his nephew was so extremely desirous of entering the army, in which an important circumstance now happened to
forward

forward that intention. News arrived at Valleroy of a signal defeat having been sustained by the Vaudois and Piedmontese troops. The French having possessed themselves of Lucern, and great part of the surrounding country, their brave commander, no longer able to contend with the enemy, had been obliged to fly with his small remaining force to Carignan; and that without an immediate supply of fresh troops, they must be annihilated, and prince Eugene, the noblest pride of the Italian nation, fall a lamented victim, or enchained to the car of the conqueror, be led captive to the gates of Paris, to enhance the dear-bought victory.

Albert, at hearing this account, exclaimed—"I feel for them as a man, and burn with ardour to revenge my country's loss;" and continued, impetuously, "oh, my mother, you cannot, you will not, now oppose my wishes for to meet this implacable enemy! In such a distressing juncture,

junction, every true patriot's bosom must glow with eagerness to unite in the common cause, when our laws, our liberty, and the lives of our fellow-citizens, are endangered by a hostile invader." Almeria, observing the maddened fervour that agitated her son, and which, being heightened by the count's all-powerful eloquence, which, like an impetuous stream, bore down every thing that impeded its progress, appeared no longer within the bounds of reason, she remained silent, inwardly lamenting the cause that had produced it. Montauban, perceiving his mother affected, said respectfully—"Believe me, dear madam, no earthly consideration whatever should have induced me to risk your displeasure but in this one instance—the imminent danger of my brave countrymen."—"Yes," replied the count, "they certainly claim your consideration: friendship shewn from man to man, in the hour of peril, is a godlike act, and deserves

serves the world's applause."—"And yet, my lord," repeated Albert, "I hope I shall never forget, that justice for them must, at the same time, be tempered with mercy to their enemies." The count then embraced Montauban, and promised that a commission should be obtained for him immediately, expressing, at the same time, his reluctance, that, from his indifferent state of health, he was prevented following the young soldier to the field of battle, from which Anselmo had often returned crowned with laurels.

Before a month had expired, the count procured from his sovereign an appointment for Montauban, who, instead of returning to Florence with his uncle, now departed for the seat of war in Piedmont. He took an affectionate leave of his mother, and conjured her to be comforted during his absence. But the agonized feelings of Almeria at parting from her son were almost beyond the

the power of language to describe. Tenderly embracing him, with much difficulty she said—"Farewell, my Albert; may Heaven protect you!" and then retired to solitude and tears.

CHAP. V.

" True, she is fair ; oh, how divinely fair !
But still the lovely maid improves her charms
With inward greatness, unaffected wisdom,
And sanctity of manners."

A LONG interval now elapsed since the departure of Montauban, and excepting one hastily-written letter, dated Calgar-ga, acquainting his mother of having joined his regiment in good health, no account had been since received from him ; and therefore the fears she entertained for his safety daily grew more and more insupportable. The count at first ridiculed her anxiety, but finding that had no effect, his temper, easily irritated

irritated and ungovernable, began warmly to remonstrate such childish behaviour, as he termed it, so unbecoming a woman of her sense and apparent resolution. Then would Anselmo reproach her with indifference and want of affection towards himself; and this idea that he cherished, so detrimental to his peace of mind, became truly distressful to Almeria, who looked forward to the future with the utmost fear.

The eighteenth month of Albert's absence had commenced, and yet no tidings of him. St. Orvillé wrote sometimes to his sister, but as he was now occupied in forming an alliance with the eldest daughter of a Venetian senator, his letters were in general filled with praises of the object of his admiration, and therefore very slightly mentioned his nephew, except in expressing his wishes for Montauban's welfare.

One evening, towards the end of July, the inhabitants of the castle were unusually

sually disturbed by loud and repeated knocking at its gates, and on demanding the cause of it, a monk belonging to the abbey of St. Julian requested an interview with count Anselmo. Almeria, whose thoughts were incessantly occupied about her son, desired that he might be instantly admitted ; and turning to her husband, said—" Oh, my lord, this man, no doubt, is the bearer of a letter to me from Albert."—" No, madam," replied the count, with sternness, " Lodovico is the bearer of a letter to me." He then commanded the servant to take lights into the north chamber, and immediately left the saloon.

During his absence, Lauretta, then in attendance on her mistress, informed her, that the stranger was confessor to the adjacent convent of Santa Maria, in which was confined a most beautiful young lady, and some people did say that the count was in love with her. " Impossible !" replied Almeria ; " you do not tell me true."—" No, my lady,
not

not for certain," answered Lauretta ; " but you know what great folks do, little ones will talk of ; and therefore it has been thought strange that the count should support a fine young woman, for so many years, and not say neither who she is, who she belongs to, nor where she is come from : indeed," continued the facetious girl, " the old housekeeper says, that when you suppose my lord is gone to the library to study books, he is gone to study something of much more consequence, as he is always seen to walk towards an old building ; and——"—" Silence !" repeated the countess, with anger ; " I'll hear no more." For although this information of Lauretta's had somewhat alarmed for the moment, yet she wisely reflected how very little dependence ought to be placed on the intelligence obtained from domestics, and therefore determined not to credit an account so injurious to her future happiness.

Anselmo entered the saloon shortly
after,

after, and ordered Laretta immediately to depart with Lodovico for the convent of Santa Maria. "Me, my lord?" said the terrified girl.—"Yes, you; obey my orders this instant!" repeated the count. Trembling with fright, and whilst looking towards a window opposite the saloon, she exclaimed—"Oh dear, oh dear, the night is so very dark! no moon, nor one single star, I do declare! I am sure I shall tumble into some dreadful cavern; may I take a light, my lord?"—"Begone," answered Anselmo, with fury. Poor Laretta then immediately left the room, and began telling her beads with the utmost devotion, not having the least doubt but that her master had overheard what she had been saying, and therefore that she was going to be locked up in the convent, as well as the lady.

In passing the hall, she saw Lodovico waiting for her under the portcullis. "Holy virgin!" exclaimed she, "there
is

is the devil, I am sure; and he is going to lay hold of me, that's for certain. Oh that ever I should have come into this infernal, terrible, frightful-looking castle!" The monk, perceiving how unwillingly she was advancing, said hastily—"Are you ready?" Immediately altering her tone, she answered—"I am coming directly, only permit me to procure a lanthorn first." Lodovico replied he had one, when turning the spring of it, the light appeared, and discovered to the agitated fancy of Laretta one of the most ferocious countenances in nature. Having now, however, approached the portal, she tremblingly followed him over the drawbridge, and he then taking fast hold of her arm, with the greatest speed directed his course to the monastery.

Anselmo observed the surprise of the countess at this occurrence; he therefore, on Laretta's leaving the saloon, began to unfold the reasons which had actuated

actuated him to send her. "It is needless," he said, "to enter into a minute recital of former events, which would be tedious, and of course uninteresting; the principal, however," continued the count, "I shall now acquaint you."

Almeria listened with profound attention, and Anselmo thus began:—"About twenty years since, travelling from Arezzo into Piedmont, with a mission for that government, my carriage was stopped by four men on horseback; they wore masks; and two of them presenting pistols into the windows, enforced my silence, by saying, that 'if I offered to make the least resistance, my life should be the sacrifice.' As money did not seem to be their immediate object, I demanded to know their business? They made no answer, but one of them rode off a few paces from the road, and dismounting, entered into a kind of hut; shortly afterwards, the man again appeared, holding in his hand a bundle;

with which he joined his companions, and delivering it to the one that was stationed at the other door of the carriage, which was then open, he placed it on the seat, and exclaimed—‘ Now you are again free !’ At the same moment, they all darted into the thickest part of the adjoining wood, and were invisible in an instant. Surprise,” continued the count, “ fixed me in a stupor; when casting my eyes on the parcel, I saw it move. The postillions desired to know whether they should proceed? I commanded not, until I had discovered its contents ; when to my great astonishment, I beheld a female infant. It was asleep ; and from its neck was suspended a ribbon, which fastening a small piece of paper, contained these words, written in the French language—‘ *Eleanor, a child entrusted to the bosom of fostering humanity.*’ I took it into my arms, and made a vow to Heaven that I would be its protector. The angelic countenance of the infant I
fancied

fancied was animated by this exclamation, for it beamed upon me a smile of seraphic import; and then leaning its head on my shoulder, again sunk into forgetfulness.

“I ordered one of the postillions,” said the count, in continuing the history, “to explore the wretched habitation from which the child had been taken, thinking it might serve as a clue to unravel so mysterious an incident. The man, on his return, acquainted me that the hut was quite deserted, and retained the appearance of having been only a stable, as there were several mangers. No hopes, therefore, of acquiring any intelligence from thence, I conducted my little charge in safety to the next post-town, where having, at a very short notice, procured a nurse for it, we continued our journey to Piedmont. In a few months afterwards,” said Anselmo, “on my return into Italy, I confided the child to the care of a respectable family at Milan, with whom

she has been an inmate until within these six years, when, for the advantage of a superior education, I gave orders that my adopted daughter should be removed to our convent of Santa Maria."

A look of incredulity from his wife succeeded this information of Anselmo's; indeed, the whole account appeared to her improbable, and as such, not deserving of the least credit. The count had observed the various expressions which had taken place in her countenance, but had not until now deigned to notice it. With sternness he said,—“Do you doubt, madam, the truth of my statement?”—When Almeria, with great address, and peculiar softness, replied, “My lord, I am not conscious of ever having related a falsehood; why, then, do you think I should doubt yours?” This evasive answer somewhat calmed the anger that was rising in the breast of Anselmo, who thus continued—“It certainly was not my intention to introduce
Eleanor

spoken, and grieved at the melancholy injunction, sat dejectedly silent. Almeria then represented to her husband the very ill state of health of Eleanor, and the natural regret that every young person must feel at parting with associates of their own age, whose juvenile ideas must be more consonant to them, than the cooler reflection of maturer years—"Yet, my lord," she continued, "I think I can distinguish in the looks of your adopted daughter, a mind irradiated by wisdom, which will ever teach the necessity of submission to your commands:" when the countess particularly addressing her, for an affirmation of what she had said, Eleanor respectfully bowed an assent to it.

Anselmo soon after left the saloon, to confer with the monk, who was waiting for him in the antichamber; and the ladies then retired to their separate apartments for the night.

CHAP. VI.

Satin, parva res est voluptatum in vita

Atque in tale agenda

Præquam quod molestum est, ita cuique comparatum

Est in ætate hominum.

Ita Diis placitum, voluptatem ut moror comes consequatur

Quin incommodi plus malique illic tadsit boni si obtigit
quid.

PLAUTUS AMPH.

.....

How short, how trifling, are the joys of life,

If with the evils that it brings compar'd!

This is the state of man, decreed by Heav'n—

That all his pleasure shall be mix'd with pain,

And lasting woe succeed each short delight.

ANONY.

THE morning dawn now began to beam his
oriental light on the castle of Valleroy ;
and

and the warbling choir, renovated from their listless state by the genial warmth of summer, melodiously filled the adjacent groves with heaven-taught harmony. The gentle current of the Arno, meandering through these rich domains, glistened beneath an unclouded sun ; and the misty vapours of the night gradually disappearing, gave to the surrounding landscape renewed and luxuriant beauties. The matin bell of the neighbouring convent of Santa Maria, swelling with deepened tone along the vale, now awoke from uneasy slumbers the lovely Eleanor. Accustomed to its well-known sound, the pious foundling instantly prepared to attend its summons, and some time elapsed before she could divest herself from the idea of still being an inhabitant of the monastery. The splendid apartment which Eleanor at present occupied, afforded to her no charms in the least, to compensate for the one she had left ; and therefore,

seating herself at the window which commanded a distant view of Santa Maria, and looking towards it with tearful eyes, exclaimed—"Beloved abode! sacred to friendship's inspired name, must I never again be permitted to visit your calm retreats, your holy sanctuary? hapless Eleanor!" she continued, "what sad destiny awaits thy future years?"

The countess, who at this sentence entered the apartment, to inform her that breakfast was in waiting, was grieved to observe her very pallid and languid countenance; she therefore requested Eleanor not to leave her room until her health was more recovered, and that she would send Lauretta to attend on her. Solitude, at all times congenial to the taste of our orphan, was more particularly so at present, being really indisposed, and her mind, from some inward cause or other, heavily oppressed with melancholy. Tenderly embracing the countess, she said, "With your permission,

See after p. 92

Eleanor at the castle, had not Lodovico informed me of her serious illness; I have therefore sent orders to the convent for her to be immediately brought to Valleroy. You, madam," the count then said, "will, I hope, be to Eleanor (what she has never yet had the felicity of knowing) an affectionate mother; believe me, she will merit your tenderest care;" and was continuing, when the bell at the outer gate of the castle, and the sound of the carriage rolling under the portcullis, announced to them the arrival of the fair invalid. Anselmo hastened into the hall, and almost immediately after, he conducted the orphan into the presence of Almeria.

The countess instantaneously rose to embrace the young stranger; but the fatigue, added to the sudden change from the walls of a monastery into so splendid an apartment as the saloon of Valleroy, entirely overcame her; she leant on the bosom of Almeria and fainted. Elea-

nor was then led to a sofa, and shortly after, from a restorative administered by the countess, again brought to life. The innumerable tapers that blazed threw a brilliant lustre on her interesting form, which was of the truest symmetry; her fine dark eyes, emanated by the celestial spark of virtue, now beamed with intelligence, and the tender sympathy of an immaterial soul. The sylph-like figure of Eleanor, rivalling even the models of Grecian art, was enveloped in a robe and veil of the finest texture, which, shading in part her beauteous face, somewhat confined the profusion of auburn hair that fell in graceful ringlets over her bosom; and from which, suspended by rows of pearls, hung a magnificent cross of diamonds, imparting a dazzling brightness on her delicate (I may say) angelic countenance.

As reclining in the arms of the countess, Eleanor now said, in the softest accents—"Dear lady, accept my thanks;"
and

and then turning to Anselmo, who was seated at the other end of the couch, exclaimed, "And as to you, my father, (for by that appellation she had often called him), how can I ever sufficiently acknowledge, much less return, the gratitude I owe for your goodness!"—"No return I wish for," interrupted the count, "except obedience to my commands; for this night you have taken a last farewell of the monastery."—"My lord," replied Eleanor, with the utmost emotion, and repeating his words, "a last farewell of Santa Maria? that revered abode, in which so many happy years have glided away in love and friendship—never to see it more!"—"Unthinking girl!" ejaculated the count, with extreme displeasure, "do you murmur at my first decree? what can possibly have attached you to a monastic life, comprised as it is of eternal sameness? you imagine, perhaps, to be shut out from the world, and passing days and nights in never-ceasing

vigils, in the gloomy cloisters of a convent, that is the road to heaven! For shame, Eleanor," he continued; "self-interest, I observe, is alone your motto: but do not deceive yourself with such fallacious hopes; with religion must also temptations be surmounted, benevolence displayed, and actions tending to the general good of mankind. All these, I say, are required, ere you can attain the summit of felicity. The gods laugh at those who, having no power to be otherwise, extol their fancied goodness, and claim for it a reward. No, no, Eleanor; virtue must be tried, before it can be accepted. If, then, (as the shining gold which endures the fire's heat, and comes out pure and undefiled,) its genuine worth is proved, a glorious recompence is the due, and an everlasting fame is its portion."

The countess now interposed in behalf of the lovely orphan, who, trembling at the warmth in which Anselmo had spoken,

service; and likewise to procure for Antonio, who was reckoned very clever at his learning, a situation as clerk to a merchant in Paris; and then commenced all my poor brother's misfortunes, for—" The saloon-bell, however, now summoning Lauretta to the countess Anselmo, it obliged her to defer the continuation of the history until the evening, when she would again be in attendance on Eleanor.

On descending into the hall, she met the old housekeeper, who accosted her with—" Come, come, girl, here will be stirring work for you soon; the count, my master, has orders from the duke of Savoy to set off immediately for Turin, and all the men-servants are to go with him, excepting Philippe, and that senseless block Francisco."—" Holy Virgin!" exclaimed Lauretta, " what's the matter? which way is the wind now, Theresa?"—" How should I know?" replied she; " I only know that my master is in a great bustle, and that we are all sent flying about,

about, like chaff out of a barn door, to get things ready for his journey." The bell now rang violently a second time. "There, girl, that's again for you; come, come, do you run down to the countess, whilst I run up and deliver a message to signora Eleanor."

On Laretta's entering the saloon, the count demanded to know the reason of her not attending the first summons? and in making an excuse for it, said—"I only stopped, my lord, to help up the old housekeeper, who in her hurry had tumbled down." She was then ordered to go to the pavilion, and acquaint her mistress of his wish to speak to her, every thing being prepared for his departure.

Almeria at that time having been apprized of the order received by Anselmo, was employed in writing a letter to her son; but on Laretta's informing her of the message of the count, she hastily folded up the paper, and returned to the saloon.

Anselmo,

Anselmo, embracing her, said—"I must now leave you, my love, for the business that calls me to Turin admits not of the least decay."—"Do you suppose your stay will be long?" replied Almeria.—"Not more than a few weeks, perhaps."—"And will you then be the bearer of this letter to Albert, as you say he is now in the fortress of Montmelian."—"Certainly," said the count; "but the purport of it?"—"A mother's fears for the safety of her son, my lord, and reproaches for his disobedience; nothing more, believe me."—"Oh, oh," replied Anselmo, laughingly, "if those are the contents, I can easily imagine the reception it will receive, Almeria."—"As to that, I am perfectly indifferent; if a child is neglectful of the duty to a parent, it is their duty to inform them of it; for slightly indeed can they hope for success through life, if wanting in respect to those who claim it by the first and most sacred tie on earth."—"Well, well,"

well," said the count, "I will give it him;" and then hastily bidding her adieu, Anselmo, attended by a numerous retinue, took their departure from Valleroy.

At the intimation of the count's intended journey by Theresa, Eleanor anxiously requested to be led to the saloon, that she might take leave of her kind benefactor, who, as she affectionately exclaimed, had acted to her the part of a father. At the concluding word of this sentence, the old housekeeper began to entertain new and various conjectures of Eleanor; and from several former occurrences, which had so mysteriously taken place at the castle, she began to believe that the signora would turn out to be no less than a daughter of count Anselmo.

Theresa, now, therefore, was extremely obsequious to Eleanor, conducted her with great care to the countess, who received her with unfeigned pleasure, but
yet

sion, I shall indeed prefer remaining in my chamber for some days, if you will offer an apology for my absence to the count, whose anger I should be extremely sorry to augment by any inattention to his commands." The assurances of Almeria, however, that Anselmo no longer bore any displeasure, and the promise she gave to pass some hours every day with her young charge, till she was enabled to quit her apartments, greatly relieved the afflicted spirits of Eleanor; who, on being again left alone, began to seek for some amusement, in perusing a favourite poem. Reading was always a source of never-failing pleasure; her sensible and feeling heart gave additional beauties to the works of an author; and when perusing the celebrated Tasso, her imagination would soar above the reach of circumstances, and create delight, even when all earthly happiness seemed fled for ever from her.

Lauretta shortly after entered with
coffee,

coffee, and making a low curtsy to Eleanor, began saying, with much apparent consequence, that she was appointed to be her attendant—"And indeed, my lady," she continued, "you will find me perfectly well qualified, for my mother was a *femme de chambre*, and my father was a *valet de chambre*, and my brother was not one, because he was mad, and therefore he, poor boy, turned poet, and was soon provided for; Antonio wrote some verses against the great lords' ladies in Paris, which they did not like, and so they sent him to prison, and there, I dare say, he will ever remain. Well, thanks be to Heaven, I have no learning!" exclaimed the loquacious girl. Eleanor could not forbear smiling, when she congratulated herself on not having acquired so dangerous an accomplishment; and sympathizing at the fate of her brother, she asked if there was not a hope of her family being able to procure his release? "Oh dear no, my lady,"

lady," said Laretta; "if they did, they would directly be sent to keep him company. Ah, signora!" she continued, "if I was to tell you all of poor Antonio's story, your heart would be sad indeed." On Eleanor's, however, assuring Laretta that she had excited in her great curiosity to be acquainted with his history, she thus began:—

"Well then, my lady, you must know, that I, as well as my brother, was born in Paris; he is now twenty-five, and I am six years younger. At the time of my birth, my father was in the service of the German baron de Holstein, who hearing that he had a wife and two children to support, the baron engaged my mother to attend on his sister, the lady Constantia, a very good mistress too she was, for permitting my mother to have me with her; and likewise sent my brother to school at her own expence. I have often heard my mother say it was the happiest period of her life; but
alas!"

alas!" continued Lauretta, sighing, "I'm afraid all pleasures are of short duration; for in the third year of our being in that family, the baron de Holstein died; and the lady Constantia was so melancholy after the death of her brother, that she left Paris almost immediately, and departed for Germany, where we have since learnt of her retiring into a convent, and of having taken the veil."

"Unfortunate Constantia! such an event must have deeply affected her!" exclaimed Eleanor; "but had she no husband, no other relations than the baron?"—"Not that we have ever heard of; my father and mother continually inquiries about the health of our benefactress," replied Lauretta, "from her agent in Paris, with whom she has left a yearly pension for them; and as it is regularly paid, my parents have been enabled, by the addition of a little farm they purchased near Versailles, to support themselves without going again to service;

yet expressed a fear that she had left her chamber too soon, and that her health might suffer for her politeness. On Almeria's acquainting her that Anselmo had already departed from the castle, Eleanor, particularly desirous of obtaining her friendship, answered, that she found her health much better, and therefore requested permission to be her companion during his absence.—“Your kind offer I embrace with delight,” said the countess, “and would challenge you for a walk in the evening, was I not afraid that it might increase your indisposition.”—“Oh no,” she replied; “indeed it will not, but be of infinite service.” This proposition agreed on, the countess observed shortly, with satisfaction, that her young friend's malady appeared to arise rather from dejection of mind than any real illness; the roses, which had been chased away from her cheeks, now began to return; and blending with the transparent white-

ness

ness of the skin, gave to her countenance all the grace and animation of a Hebe.

“And when fair wisdom joins in the design,
The beauty of the whole result’s divine.”

The day glided away in happiness to Eleanor, and would likewise have so passed to the countess, had not anxiety for Albert, and some latent uneasiness respecting her husband, prevented it.

A declining sun now emitted his last rays through a cloudless sky; the distant landscape was softened by the dews of eve; and a gentle gale, whispering amongst the trees, breathed delicious perfumes. From the loveliness of the weather, and beauty of the prospect, the walk of Eleanor and the countess was extended far beyond their original intention. On turning a point of rock, they observed to the left a cavern, excavated out of the mountain, and composed of granite; the entrance to it
was

was shaded by almond and olive trees; the ground overspread with rosemary, lavender, wild thyme, and various aromatic shrubs. The curiosity of the ladies excited them to explore this hollow recess; when Francisco, who attended them, began to expostulate against their proceeding—"Honoured mistress," said he, addressing the countess, "that cave is haunted by evil spirits; for I do assure you," continued he, trembling, "the peasants declare, that on returning to their homes at night, they have seen several gigantic spectres walking about with torches in their hands, and that their heads appeared to touch the ceiling; they sometimes play on several sorts of music, and——"

"No more of such a ridiculous story, I beseech you, Francisco, but follow us."—"Had I not then better remain at the door, my lady?" replied he, "that in case you should be run away with by those gentry, I may be ready to give
the

the alarm?"—"Pray let him do so," said Eleanor, smiling; and then turning to the old man, exclaimed, "Be steady at your post, Francisco, and call out vociferously, if you think there is any danger."—"That I will indeed, young lady," replied he.

On their entering, the curiosity of the countess and Eleanor was amply gratified, and their pleasure converted into amazement when they, beheld the majestic columns and noble pillars which supported the fabric; they were partly mutilated, but yet, from their radiant whiteness, appeared extremely beautiful; and the sparry icicles which were suspended from the vaulted roof, resembled wax tapers, and did indeed throw on the whole structure an appearance of enchantment.

Whilst the countess Anselmo was admiring the magnificence of the place, and contemplating on the wonders of rude uncultivated nature, Eleanor's attention

tention was diverted to a distant part of the cave, where stood the figure of a saint carved from wood, in one hand holding a crucifix, and in the other a book; on a column, near the statue, was placed an hour-glass, a torch which seemed but just extinguished, and a small ivory box. Curiosity prompted her to open it, to discover its contents, when the sound of an approaching footstep, followed by a deep sigh, caused Eleanor to exclaim, although supposing it to be the countess—"Dear lady, why will you frighten one so?" The faintness of Almeria's voice, however, in answer, and her exclamation of—"Where are you?" now convinced the trembling girl that she was not the object of her alarm. With uncontrollable swiftness, therefore, Eleanor regained the door, calling out, "Here, here," when passing Francisco, almost breathless with fear, she said—"Oh, save your mistress!" upon which the poor fellow, although not able to

stir from the spot through fright, began to cry out vociferously—"Help! help! thieves, murder, and robbery! Oh dear, oh dear, the countess and I shall be killed. Help! help!"—"For Heaven's sake," replied Almeria, who had joined her attendant, "what is all this noise for, Francisco?"—"Why, honoured lady," said he, hesitating, and falling on his knees for pardon, "the young signora informed me the ruffians—the apparitions I mean, had got hold of you, my lady." 'And so,' says she, 'Francisco do you stay where you are, only make a great noise.' And I am sure I did make a great noise, my lady, for I am quite hoarse with calling out so loudly."—"And where is Eleanor?" repeated the countess, with anger.—"That, indeed, I cannot tell, my lady; I saw the signora fly across yonder orange-grove, but what has become of her after that I don't know."—"How extremely ridiculous is such behaviour! Come, sir,"
continued

continued Almeria, "follow me to the grove then, that we may endeavour to find her."

Their search, however, proved in vain. Every cottage, hut, or dwelling-place, in the vicinity of Valleroy, was explored by Francisco and his mistress, without success. All hopes, therefore, of finding the fair fugitive having expired, and night advancing, they returned to the castle. The countess, in the utmost distress of mind, inquired of the steward if he had seen Eleanor? On being answered in the negative, she then directly ordered Francisco to repair to the monastery, faintly supposing that she might, in her alarm, have taken the path which led through the intricacies of the Apennines to Santa Maria.

On regaining the saloon, Almeria took up a book, to wile away the hours that Francisco must necessarily be absent. Some time, however, having elapsed, and yet no intelligence arriving of either,

the uneasiness of the countess became so excessive, as at length to determine her to wait no longer the return of the servant, but to depart herself for the convent. Accompanied, therefore, only by Laretta, she again left the castle, and proceeded towards Santa Maria. The moon, just rising over the mountains, was of a deep red, and surrounded by dark clouds touched with flame; a few trembling stars shone in the hemisphere; but gradually disappearing, from the increased brilliancy of their superior planet, they at length left her sole empress over the skies. The wind in gentle murmurs died away; not a single zephyr sighed amongst the trees, to disturb the stillness that reigned around; all nature was at peace, save some few airy inhabitants of the night, that occasionally flitted across the path, and in dulcet melody proclaimed their artless loves.

On the countess and Laretta approaching into a private track, which
led

led a nearer way to the drawbridge, the former involuntarily started: the sound of a lute was heard in the adjoining temple. "Ah," said Laretta, as the strain continued, "it is an evening hymn to our blessed Virgin! Surely, my lady, it is the signora that is playing on purpose to terrify us;" but instantly recollecting herself, she resumed, "yet that is not probable, for I have heard Theresa say that the temple has been locked up for many years, by a strict order from count Anselmo, and no person permitted to enter it on any account whatever."

"That injunction we must obey then, Laretta," said the countess; "yet it is strange; the sounds evidently come from thence; and look," repeated Almeria, "do you not observe a figure gliding by the windows? Now it stops. Ah! I fear some dreadful history belongs to that temple."—"Indeed, my lady," she answered with trepidity, whilst looking
F 3 towards

towards it, "I do see something moving about, all in black, and without a head! I am sure, instead of advancing out of the castle, we ought to make a speedy return into it, my lady."

The countess, although possessed of sufficient resolution in general to brave every danger (from the proud consciousness of innate rectitude), yet the various incidents which had taken place, with such rapidity, within the last twenty-four hours, were distressing and awful. The arrival of Eleanor, scarcely announced at Valleroy before she is again lost; the sudden departure of her husband for Turin; the unpleasant scene which had happened at the cavern; and last of all, and most terrifying, was the mysterious inhabitant of the temple, which, notwithstanding Almeria's having been more than three years a resident at the castle, had never before attracted her attention, except once during a walk with the count, who merely answered

swered the inquiry, by saying it had formerly been appropriated for a bath, but then, of no further service, being completely uninhabited.

The sublime strain now finished, and the figure was instantly lost to the sight of the astonished Almeria and her attendant. The concurrent events in so short a period, and retrospection of the past, now forcibly affected the countess Almeria: with faltering voice, and tearful eyes, she said—"My good girl, from the respect I think you have for me, I charge you not to mention to your fellow-servants, nor to any other person, one word respecting what we have seen this night; such a disclosure, if heard of by the count, would deeply irritate his feelings, and perhaps be the means of your instantaneous discharge from my service: yet," continued Almeria, sighing, "although such must be the secrecy attendant on the affair, we will, if it is possible, procure a key of that temple, and

then explore the mystery which envelops it." Laretta, apparently agitated from the conclusion of this sentence, the countess consoled her by saying—"Fear not the effect of supernatural agency, which, in reality, has no existence, but fear the effect that may be produced from human villany ; there lies the evil. When man, great ruler of this ephemeron world, conspires, with deadly hatred, against his brother man, wide-spreading devastation must be the baneful consequence." Almeria, however, on perceiving the pale and frightened looks of her servant, and likewise thinking it might be imprudent to venture by themselves to the monastery, at length consented to return to the castle.

In their walk through the grove of linden trees, which was opposite the eastern windows of Valleroy, the sounds of music were repeated, fainter than before, yet not less sweet. A few rapid chords being struck by a masterly hand,
the

the air commenced with peculiar grace, imparting an expressive wildness of fancy in the execution, altogether grand and pleasing. "Hark! the lute has begun again," said Lauretta, who now was more courageous as she continued to approach the castle; "indeed, my lady, I think it is the signora."—"I know not what to think," replied Almeria, "yet let us then advance nearer this invisible musician, and be convinced."

On their turning into a path from whence the sounds proceeded, it was almost darkened by interwoven branches which entwined each other in soft embraces, and on whose boughs the liquid note of a nightingale had begun to chant her plaintive song to the listening moon. Between an interstice of the grove, near a fountain whose gentle spring supplied a small marble bason, and surrounded with flowers of the most delightful perfume, stood a kind of hermitage. During the noonday heat, it

had always been a favourite retreat for Anselmo, to indulge in meditation and study.

“ Here, plung’d amid the shadows brown,
Imagination lays him down;
Attentive, in his airy mood,
To ev’ry murmur of the wood;
The bee in yonder flow’ry nook;
The chidings of the headlong brook;
The green leaf quiv’ring in the gale;
The warbling hill; the lowing vale;
The distant woodman’s echoing stroke;
The thunder of the falling oak. \

From thought to thought, in vision led,
He holds high converse with the dead.”

To this romantic and melancholy abode then, Almeria now bent her steps. The music instantly ceased; and her exclamation of “ Eleanor,” and “ where are you?” was followed by a terrific scream of her attendant, who being at a short distance from her mistress, called out—“ There it flies towards the temple!”

and

and continued—"Oh, my lady, I shall certainly die with fright if you will not quit this terrible place." All the countess's expostulations to Lauretta, in hopes of calming her disturbed imagination, had no effect; the poor girl fancied she had again seen the spectre. She was therefore obliged, however unwillingly, to yield to her remonstrance of regaining the castle, where, however, no Eleanor or Francisco had yet arrived.

Wearied and unhappy, Almeria then re-entered the saloon, flung herself upon a couch, and shed tears abundantly, whilst reproaches mentally afflicted her, for ever having consented to become the wife of Anselmo. His mysterious conduct, and sometimes cool treatment towards her, so unlike the tenderness, the love, she had experienced from the gallant but unfortunate Montauban, bore heavy on the already-distressed mind of the countess. Past years were reflected upon with deep-felt anguish, future ones with

insupportable terror. As the timid deer, therefore, flies from the hunter's cry, and seeks for covert in the fostering shades, far from the haunts of men and its wild pursuers, so did Almeria wish to be immured, and to weep away her life, alone and unobserved, in the friendly nook of some distant mountain.

Such sad thoughts as these succeeding each other with astonishing rapidity, drove her almost to madness. With wildness exclaiming—"Why, my lord, oh, why could not my gratitude be returned in some other way than this? Had I been possessed of the riches of Golconda's mines, you should have had them all—all, Anselmo, to have repaid the obligation I owed you; yet they would not have been enough; no, myself must likewise be the sacrifice, and therefore am I doomed to endless misery;" continuing in a frenzied manner, "wretched Almeria! My son, too, dear Albert, hates his mother for this second marriage, and sedulously avoids her."

"Heavenly

“Heavenly powers!” ejaculated a voice, that now struck motionless the heart of Almeria—“Avoid you! not for worlds would I avoid you.” The countess now turning round to her auditor, beheld with astonishment and ineffable delight the object of her only hope, her dearest Albert, kneeling at her feet for pardon, and pressing with fervour her almost lifeless form.

Almeria held out her hand towards him as a token of forgiveness; would have spoken, but could not; utterance, indeed, seemed totally denied to her; again looked, sighed heavily, and nature then being quite exhausted, she fainted in the arms of her son.

“Oh, my mother! my beloved mother!” continued the agitated Montauban, “revive, oh, revive, to bless your Albert, whose existence is no longer valuable than whilst it tends to prolong the life, and promote the happiness of his parent.” These cheering and con-
soling

soling words gradually restored the bewildered senses of the countess; whilst clasping Albert to her breast she exclaimed—"Image of your dead father, the brave Montauban! oh, my boy, he lives again in you! judge, therefore, the agony of your mother, from your long absence, and yet greater for the cause that produced it. War! destructive war!" she continued, "which engulphs whole nations in one dreadful scene of slaughter, tearing the husband from his wife, the child from his parent, destroying the happiness of thousands; and all for to satisfy the wild furor, the unsatiated ambition, perhaps, of an individual."

Every endearment, every kind attention, did Albert then have recourse to, in order to sooth the perturbed spirits of his mother; yet still the fate of Eleanor continued to distress and perplex her. The countess, therefore, communicated to Montauban, in very few words, the history of their short acquaintance,

quaintance, and the orphan's sudden and mysterious flight.

At this intelligence, it was with difficulty Albert could be retained from going in pursuit, even before she had mentioned the place most probable to find her—the monastery of Santa Maria.

“Not a moment should be lost, dear madam,” exclaimed the young soldier, as he now ran, or rather flew, to remount his horse, which, with his servant, was in waiting at the gates of the castle, and who offered to attend him ; but Montauban, hastily declining his services, set off full speed, and was out of sight in an instant.

CHAP. VII.

“ His days appear a constant scene of joy ;
Gold glitters in his precious robes ;
His pride’s as boundless as his wealth ;
He never wounds the air with mournful sighs ;
The voice of harmony salutes his ear,
When he lies down to sleep ; and when he wakes,
Triumphant plenty, with a cheerful grace,
Basks in his eyes, and sparkles in his face.”

WHILST Albert is employed on the friendly mission of endeavouring to regain the lovely fugitive, we shall pursue count Anselmo to the castle of Oldenzo, previous to his journey into the province of Piedmont, and elucidate the apparent cause for the dark shade of embarrassments
with

with which he was surrounded. On that day, a letter arrived at Valleroy for Anselmo, of a most distressing nature: it was from signior Rodolphus, the successor of the count (by his express recommendation to the duke of Savoy) in his senatorial capacity. Anselmo and Rodolphus were on the strictest terms of friendship, from the intimacy which had long subsisted between their families, and the contiguity of their residence in Tuscany. Both were Italians from birth, and each were alike distinguishable for personal bravery and attachment to their country. In consequence of the derangement in the affairs of Rodolphus, after the decease of his father, and the displeasure that his mother felt at his marriage with a German lady of obscure birth, he had for some years absented himself from Italy, and chiefly resided in the French dominions. On the death, however, of his mother, and the high post occupied by his friend, the count, at the illustrious
court

court of Savoy, who promised to procure him an eligible situation under the government, he returned with his family, consisting of his wife, one son, and a daughter, into Italy, and took up his abode at his paternal mansion, near Grossetto, in Tuscany.

As Rodolphus will bear no inconsiderable part in this history, a few striking features of his character may now be thought necessary, to form the judgment of the reader as to his pretensions for successfully supplying the place of such an active and profound politician as the count Anselmo, whose loss was generally lamented. Signior Rodolphus possessed great erudition, was well bred, particularly versed in the manners of the courts of Europe, and thoroughly acquainted with their various forms of government. Being also master of several languages, he was proficient in a florid kind of oratory, which imperceptibly led, without apparent design or intention,

intention, the disposition of his hearers to coincide with him in any act that he projected; and although naturally possessed of a sullen and unforgiving temper, if ever thwarted in any of his favourite pursuits, yet we must attribute to him great boldness in his enterprizes, as entertaining a sovereign contempt for danger. In this latter trait he resembled his friend, though with some slight difference: Anselmo's temper partook too much of that impetuosity of Rodolphus, which often rendered him headstrong and ungovernable, both in his words and actions: the latter, more prudent, seldom gave way to the heats and bursts of passion; for his quick-sighted sagacity endued him with a presence of mind suitable to all emergencies, whilst his friend was often too much elated by the events that bore a prosperous aspect, and too depressed or desponding under those whose appearance were adverse.

Rodolphus

Rodolphus never despaired; Hope always sat triumphant on his brow, amidst every misfortune; and a point once determined on in his mind, was never relinquished; no, not even at the hazard of life. Anselmo frequently inclined more to the advice of others, whom he thought either more sensible, or better informed on the subject; but Rodolphus never; self-confident, he acted with positive and determinate firmness; and, on that account, in the deranged state of the affairs of the country at that period, Rodolphus was unanimously judged to be the most able, most competent successor of count Anselmo. Such a man seemed certainly formed to be at the helm of the government, where the people were beginning to be factious and divided, jealous of the power of aristocracy, and yet sunk into such a state of apathy and indolence, that it required much foresight, great prudence, and

and strong energy of mind, to rouse them to a due sense of their impending danger.

Since the marriage of Anselmo with madame de Montauban, from some incidental cause, neither Rodolphus or his family had visited Valleroy; yet not from any apparent difference having arisen between them, for seldom a week was suffered to elapse, when signior Rodolphus was in Tuscany, without Anselmo's being a guest at the residence of his friend. It was now, therefore, on the return of the latter from Turin, that he immediately wrote to the count, requesting a conference with him, and likewise advising the expediency of Anselmo's repairing to that capital without loss of time, as unpleasant rumours had been circulated much to his disadvantage, and the public opinion had of late been expressed with great virulence against Anselmo, respecting his marriage with the widow of general de Montauban,

together

together with retiring from office when his services were most required by his country. Rodolphus thought it, therefore, highly proper, he said, that his friend should appear in person at the court of Savoy, to refute the injurious charge against his honour, and repel the foul aspersions of his character.

The contents of this letter no less agitated than astonished the count, because four years had been suffered to expire since those events had taken place, and until this period not even the slightest sound of defamation's voice had ever reached the knowledge of Anselmo; but being now undoubtedly traduced, and by that means his character materially injured, the count also thought it advisable immediately to set out for Turin, and to solicit an interview with the duke of Savoy, for the purpose of procuring, if possible, the names of those persons by whom he had been calumniated.

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On his departure from Valleroy, the count and his retinue first proceeded to the castle of Rodolphus, where he was received with every demonstration of friendship. On his entrance into the grand hall, which was hung round with military trophies and other warlike ensigns, he was welcomed by the wife of Rodolphus and her son, an elegant young man, then in his twentieth year, and in person and manners greatly resembling his father. Ernestine Rodolphus had been an officer in the same regiment with Albert de Montauban, yet no cordiality subsisted between them; indeed a most disdainful conduct had been manifested towards each other; and in consequence of that, and a recent quarrel, Rodolphus challenged Albert: they fought, and the latter being wounded, as was then supposed seriously, prince Eugene, from the great respect he entertained for Montauban, ordered that his antagonist should be immediately

mediately cashiered ; and therefore Rodolphus thus retired from the army in disgust.

Anselmo having been apprized by the elder Rodolphus of the disastrous termination of the duel, and of the resignation of his son in consequence of it, he addressed a very severe and sarcastic letter on the subject to Albert, who, highly incensed at such an unjust remonstrance from the count, when it was so well known that Ernestine Rodolphus was the aggressor, he, in the heat of passion, without the aid of reason, or the least consideration, returned for answer one equally spirited and indignant ; and had the temerity to reproach Anselmo with the undue influence he had contrived to obtain over his mother, for the purpose of receiving the honour of her hand in marriage ; that his wealth, titles, the splendour of his residence, and the public voice of fame, which were all attached to the count, might perhaps be considered

dered by the generality of her sex as baubles worthy their acceptance; but that his mother, a woman endowed with such superiority of sense and personal accomplishments, the widow, too, of his father, the late general de Montauban, by her they would ever be considered as dross; and the day, the hour, that witnessed the solemnization of their nuptials, had (he believed) fatally consigned his mother to unceasing regret, and to eternal misery.

On the receipt of this letter by the count, his rage knew no bounds. He made a solemn vow to renounce Albert for ever, and to deprive him of all claims on his fortune and estates, which, in order the more effectually to gain an interest in the heart of Almeria, he had settled on her son previous to their marriage. This determination of the count was sent in his own hand-writing to Montauban, with this injunction likewise—"That at his peril, he should ne-

ver again dare to appear at Valleroy, on any account whatever; that if he was seen, even in the precincts of that place, his life should be the atonement for his audacity."

This dreadful mandate did not in the least terrify or come unexpected to Albert: yet he deeply regretted the consequent deprivation of his enjoying the society of his beloved mother; from another circumstance, too, he inwardly reproached himself with having been the occasion of such a severe sentence from the count Anselmo; yet his pride rose so predominant to every consideration of personal interest, that any acknowledgement, or confession of error, was deemed by Albert as derogatory to his honour, and to him far dearer than life itself.

Thence was it to be ascribed the non-receival of letters from him at Valleroy: he had oft written to his mother, but as oft were they intercepted by the count; and no communication whatever, directed

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ed to her, was to be delivered without his express permission first obtained, and examining their contents. Anselmo was certainly so far prudent in not making known to the countess the displeasure he felt towards her son, who had ever been regarded by the count with jealousy and suspicion; and the late indignity he had received, confirmed more strongly the aversion Anselmo had before entertained of him. The renunciation of Albert, and denial of access to the castle, was the ostensible motive which actuated the count to send for Eleanor from the monastery, in hopes that her soft manners, her mild and obliging behaviour, would tend to console the mind of the countess, and divert from the uneasiness which had possessed it, by the protracted absence of her son.

A few weeks previous to the departure of Anselmo for Savoy, the presence of Montauban was required at Turin, to

attend a military council. He therefore left his regiment in the suit of prince Eugene; and on their arrival at the capital, his royal highness immediately introduced our young hero at court, with an express recommendation, for his bravery and his good deportment, since he had been under his command; and in consequence, Albert de Montauban was most graciously received by the duke of Savoy, who deeply deplored the loss the army had sustained from his father's death, and yet the more for the occasion that unhappily had produced that event. The duke then went on to say, "That every method had been resorted to, from which they might hope to discover the calumniators of the deceased general, in whose cause the country had of late been particularly interested." The name of the count Anselmo was then mentioned by the duke with extreme displeasure, and some explanation concerning him seemed to be expected

expected from Albert. Revenge was now in his power ; yet did the upright mind of the young soldier scorn to indulge in his breast so unfair and unmanly a gratification, as that of injuring the reputation of the absent. On the contrary, in answer to his sovereign, Montauban sought to palliate even the indiscretions of Anselmo, by saying, his health certainly required repose and retirement ; and as to the marriage of his mother with the count, he thought their affection mutual—gratitude actuating the one, sincere love the other.

It would not have been possible for Anselmo at this juncture to have had a more powerful advocate than Albert de Montauban, whose character, at this early age, and short period of being in the army, had risen high in the estimation of his profession, and entitled him to the gratitude of his countrymen ; but what had tended more than all to endear him to these, and to claim his sovereign's

thanks, was his signal prowess in preserving the valuable life of his royal commander. At the commencement of his career, Albert was ordered, with a detachment of Piedmontese troops, to make a sortie from the fortress of Montmelian; and during the time he was successfully engaged with the enemy, Montauban observed at a distance prince Eugene, who was arriving with only two attendants, to inspect the fortress in disguise, surrounded by a party of Frenchmen, who had been laying in ambush amidst some vineyards. With an incredible velocity, Albert immediately mounted the charger of a French officer whom he had wounded, his own having been shot in the rencounter, and hastened to the assistance of the prince. Plunging through the ranks of the enemy, and dealing destruction with his sabre to those who opposed his progress, Montauban arrived just in time to ward off from his defenceless chieftain the deadly blow
that

that was levelled at him, and to bear him off triumphantly from the dastardly, the astonished crew. One of the followers of the prince was slain; but the other, through the valour of Montauban, escaped in safety.

Having experienced the most distinguished marks of royal favour during his short residence at the capital, Albert rejoined his regiment, which was then in the neighbourhood of Turin, they having some time previous been compelled to evacuate the fortress of Montmelian, through failure of the necessary supplies, and a contagious mortality reigning amongst the troops of the garrison.

In returning to the reception count Anselmo met at the castle of Rodolphus, it may suffice to say, no expence was spared by which its inhabitants could demonstrate the cordiality and the friendship which subsisted between them. Signior Rodolphus, who had been enjoying the sports of the chace, now arrived to

welcome the count; he was then in close conference with Ernestine in the saloon, who (his mother having retired to give orders to the domestics) was informing Anselmo, with deep concern, from a promise of secrecy, of the fatal cause of the quarrel between him and Montauban. On the entrance of his father, Ernestine abruptly changed the conversation, yet not without an intimation to resume it that night; if Anselmo would permit him to enter his apartment.

The usual compliments and expressions of kindness at the meeting of the friends being over, and after their having taken refreshment the best the castle could afford, Rodolphus requested a private conference with the count, who instantly followed him to the library, and where they remained in close converse for several hours. On re-entering the saloon, Rodolphus sought by various ways to amuse his friend, appearing at the same time unusually gay and sportive.

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Not so Anselmo; a deep and profound melancholy hung over his brow; his ideas were often so abstracted, and his mind so completely absent from the present scene of mirth, that it required much foresight, and the greatest prudence, in the master of the mansion, to prevent his guest from uttering exclamations which it seemed Rodolphus thought better should be concealed. His daughter Lavigna, a pleasing girl, just emerged into fashionable life from the confines of a monastery, was now therefore commanded by her father to exert likewise her powers of vocal fascination, in the hope that music's powerful charm would tend to divert the count from his reverie. A national air, describing the love of an Alpine shepherd for his mistress, was then sung by Lavigna, with much pathos and judgment. The melody of the composition, though simple, was beautifully pathetic, yet it could not sooth or calm the contending agonies existing in the
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breast of Anselmo. Rodolphus perceiving the evident uneasiness of his friend, immediately ordered lights to be brought, and then conducted the count to his apartment. A sullen silence was observed by Anselmo towards Rodolphus, who, on leaving him, exclaimed—"Are you a man? if you are, you do not behave like one." The count, however, heeded not this abrupt and singular question of Rodolphus, who, on finding his friend so completely lost in thought, and disposed for solitude, left him to his meditations.

Shortly after, Ernestine, who was true to his appointment with the count, knocked softly at the door of his chamber; having waited some time in expectation of admittance, a second signal was given by him, and then endeavoured to open it; but on finding it locked, he listened, and fancied he heard the voice of Anselmo, apparently moaning in great anguish. In the intervals of the sudden

gusts

gusts of wind, which kept blustering through the casements, and whistled along the hall with dismal sound, it was repeated with greater agony. "My lord!" now ejaculated Ernestine, with emotion, "are you indisposed? I entreat you suffer me to be a sharer in your grief, from whatever cause it unhappily arises." No answer was however returned to this kind intention of the youth to the count, who therefore finding all expostulation useless, and supposing the reason to be Anselmo's sudden and alarming illness, hastily descended to the saloon, with a communication to his father of their guest's indisposition. Rodolphus, who had so recently parted from his friend in perfect health, except being mentally agitated, for which he knew that solitude was the only remedy, and most efficient cure for him, began therefore to smile at these ridiculous fears of his son, as he termed it, and peremptorily commanded that the count Anselmo

should not again be disturbed from his repose.

In the morning, the family having met at the breakfast-table, and no appearance of the count, Rodolphus then ordering one of his servants to apprise Anselmo of the lateness of the hour, was informed by the domestic that the count had already taken his departure for Turin, without any of his attendants, who had, however, been desired to follow him with all convenient speed. Rodolphus inquiring of his servant whether the count had proceeded in his carriage? was answered, "No, my lord, on horseback." This strange and unexpected retreat of Anselmo produced no surprise from Rodolphus, who was accustomed to these singular flights of his friend; every thing, therefore, in a few hours, appeared restored in this mansion to its usual order and serenity.

CHAP. VIII.

Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise that has surviv'd the fall !
Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or tasting, long enjoy thee ; too infirm,
Or too incautious, to preserve thy sweets
Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect
Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup. COWPER.

WE will now leave Anselmo to visit the castle of Valleroy, where joy brightened the countenance of its inhabitants, from the appearance of our youthful warrior, whose presence had so greatly cheered the afflicted heart of his mother. We have likewise to say, that her anxiety respecting the fate of Eleanor was soon terminated,

terminated, by the second arrival of her son at Valleroy with the fair fugitive. On re-entering the saloon, Albert conducted the blushing girl to the arms of the countess, who received her with unfeigned pleasure and cordiality. Having been apprized by Montauban of the alarm that her absence had produced at the castle, and acquainting him with the real cause of her flight, confused and agitated upon the occasion, Eleanor possessed not the power, nor had the inclination, to defend her singular conduct; the task, the pleasing task, of being her advocate, in consequence was undertaken by Albert. He candidly stated to his mother, that the same instantaneous fear which had compelled her young friend to fly from the cavern, actuated likewise to prevent her knowing the leading path to Valleroy. "Wandering among the mountains, vainly seeking for the habitation of some human being to direct her to the castle,
and

and night fast advancing, you can well imagine," continued Albert to the countess, "the increasing terror of Eleanor in such a situation; but Providence, which never fails to protect the innocent, at last directed her to the cottage of an aged shepherdess, near the monastery of Santa Maria, where, being almost exhausted with fatigue, she knocked at the door, requesting admittance. On hearing the sound of a female voice, the old woman, with her daughter, (a young girl about fifteen years of age,) came out, and upon communicating her situation, kindly offered her their assistance. Your lovely charge, madam," continued Albert, "was then led into their little dwelling, and from them received the most hospitable treatment. The road I took to gain the monastery necessarily obliged me to pass that very cottage; and on alighting from my horse, to make inquiry for the shortest way to Santa Maria, I here met,

with

with pleasure unexpected, the object of my search, dearest Eleanor." Confused, however, at having called her by so familiar an appellation, Albert was unable to continue the recital. The remainder of it was therefore left to Eleanor, who, with much sweetness of voice, her peculiar characteristic, acknowledged the obligation she felt for his kind care, in conducting her from the cottage to Valeroy, and the delight she experienced at being again restored to her benefactress.

The countess Anselmo being now relieved from those agonizing fears respecting the fate of her son and Eleanor, which had likewise so truly distressed her, became not only cheerful, but enjoyed for several hours, in their society, happiness devoid of inward sorrow—the latter too long the companion of the amiable Almeria. Montauban, however, had accomplished more in that day, from the speed with which he had performed his journey,

journey, than his strength would permit, considering the effects of the recent duel between him and Rodolphus, and the acute pain experienced from his wound. The ball had perforated his right shoulder, and from too great fatigue began to bleed afresh. For some time, Albert endeavoured to conceal the effusion, by twisting a handkerchief round it, and pretending drowsiness, that he might be permitted to retire soon to his apartment. The countess, on perceiving his wan and pallid countenance, immediately ordered lights to be brought for that purpose; and on Montauban's taking leave of his mother and her *protégée*, to the latter addressing himself with peculiar softness, Eleanor, who had hitherto been afraid of encountering the expressive looks of the young soldier, now ventured to raise her downcast eyes, to return his salutation, when, with a look of extreme terror, she exclaimed—"Oh Heaven, I am the unhappy

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py cause of all this;" and with more faintness continued—"therefore shall I be for ever miserable." The surprise of the countess, from such incoherent sentences proceeding from the lips of Eleanor, could only be equalled by observing in an instant afterwards that she had fallen lifeless into the arms of Montauban.

In a moment of such consternation, Albert became forgetful of every thing around him but the lovely orphan; he tore off the handkerchief from his arm, and with evident distraction of mind declared he would never survive her loss. The mother's amazement was now changed into horror, on observing that her son was wounded, and apparently, too, bereft of sense, whilst with inexpressible agony he pressed to his heart the death-like form of Eleanor, who still remained in a state of insensibility. The countess immediately rang the bell for assistance; and on the domestics attending

ing the summons, they were scarcely less terrified than their mistress, who, with imploring looks and beseeching accents, was then persuading Albert to leave Eleanor to her care, that he might himself receive the aid he stood so much in need of.

The first that entered the saloon was the servant of Montauban; he likewise entreated his master to accede to the wishes of the countess—"Dear sir," continued the poor fellow, "pray suffer me to lead you to your chamber; indeed you are very ill." This last expression had the effect of recalling to animation the fainting Eleanor; she sighed deeply, but being too fatally convinced of the assertion of the domestic, again hid herself in his bosom, and burst into a flood of tears.

Montauban perceiving that she was recovering, now consigned her to the protection of his mother; to whom, in hopes of consoling her, he pronounced with cheerfulness,

cheerfulness, that his indisposition would be trifling, was he but relieved of the fears he entertained of Eleanor's. The apparent mutual regard of these young people for each other, during the short space of a few hours acquaintance, appeared to all so astonishing, and to the countess so perfectly unintelligible, that it was with difficulty she could find words again to solicit, if the entreaties of a parent were at all to be respected, that he would retire to his apartment. Almeria likewise informed the object of her solicitude, that a monk from an adjacent convent was sent for expressly to attend on him, being well skilled in the art of surgery and simples—"By whatever malignant hand you have received your wound, dear Albert," continued the countess, "rest assured that a mother's prayers for the restoration of the health of her son will not be unavailing."—"Then, madam," answered the agitated Montauban, "you must pray for the recovery of
of

of Eleanor, for on her life depends that of your Albert's." When immediately, without waiting for a reply, Montauban, attended by Lupino, left the saloon; and on repairing to his chamber, there awaited the arrival of the stranger, from whom however he vainly hoped for relief. Mental anguish was the real wound which tormented the gallant soldier; and that malady, with only human foresight, appeared to him without a remedy.

It has been said, that perfection of character, were it possible to describe it, ought not to be represented; its very greatness, and the utter impossibility of acquiring that heavenly attribute here on earth, would probably deter the reader from endeavouring to attain it; such might amaze the mind, dazzle the understanding, and attract the attention for a season, but of such a season would be the termination of its existence. For the sake of example, necessity imposes the task of portraying faults, as well as displaying

displaying virtues, and that the latter should preponderate is as just as honourable to the feelings of an author, who always should endeavour, even amidst the lighter sallies of wit and humour, to inculcate morality, excite emulation, and at the same time, whilst they please the imagination, they may instruct and make the heart glow with the sentiments of virtue and distinguished goodness. In delineating, therefore, the character of Albert, although we shall find more actions worthy of praise than to condemn, we shall likewise, being but in the sphere of mortality, find many deserving of censure. His disposition, generous and noble, was, however, unforgiving, in those instances where he thought his honour sustained an injury; for then, not even the savage lion, who exults in human prey, could equal the fury of Montauban, when aroused to it by fell ingratitude or supposed insult.

This lamentable trait of character had

now

now then an opportunity, too fatally for his own peace, of fully displaying itself, from the arrival of the stranger, who, on lifting up his cowl, discovered himself to be the friend of the count Anselmo, the monk Lodovico. Surprise, indignation, arising even to abhorrence, swelled in the breast of Albert, at the unexpected sight of this man, Lodovico being but too well known to him. "Well, sir," said Montauban, with peculiar dignity and contempt marked on his countenance, "to whom am I to consider myself indebted for the honour of your attendance?"—"To your mother, sir," replied the monk, with a seeming servility in his aspect, although inwardly hurt at such a reception; and on perceiving the rising indignation of Albert at this information, continued, in a less pleasing tone of voice—"Humanity, young soldier, was the watch-word that brought me here; but insolence, I now understand, is the countersign."

countersign.”—“ Humanity !” retorted Montauban, with irony, “ which you have never practised, and know not what it means ; away then with the ambiguous phrase, and let your oracle be understood.” To this singular reply and insinuation of Albert, respecting the motive which could have induced the monk to visit him, no answer was returned. Lodovico arose from his seat, and with one look he darted at Montauban, in which was mingled contempt, rage, and despair, he instantly quitted the apartment.

On descending into the hall, Lodovico met the countess Anselmo. Her affectionate inquiries of the state of her son’s health was replied to by the monk with every apparent mark of friendship—“ Rest, rest, my dear lady,” said he, “ is all that your son now requires : gay, volatile, and heedless of any danger arising from his indiscretion, he has performed a journey in one day which a prudent

prudent man would only have undertaken to have done in three: it has therefore brought on a slight inflammation in the wound; perfect repose, however, both of mental and bodily fatigue, will, I think, effect a speedy cure. At all times," continued Lodovico, bowing with great respect, "my advice and services are at your command: indeed, no greater pleasure could be conferred on me, by my noble friends at Valleroy, than to be enabled to prove this asseveration." An inquiry was then made by the monk after the health of their *protégée*; and on hearing from the countess that Eleanor, although far from being recovered, was yet more composed and easy in her mind, Lodovico again took his departure for the monastery.

To account for the unpleasant reception he had met with from Montauban, it will be necessary to relate some past

events which had taken place at the castle, during the former visit of Albert to Valleroy.

CHAP. IX.

Ut vidi ! ut peri ! ut me malus abstulit aror. VIRGIL.

How have I yielded to the dear delusion !

I saw, and seeing, was undone for ever.

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Nought under heaven so strongly doth allure
The sense of man, and all his mind possess,
As beauty's lovely bait; that doth procure
Great warriors of their rigour to repress,
And mighty hands forget their manliness,
Drawn with the power of an heart-robbing eye,
And wrapt in fetters of golden tress,
That can with melting pleasures mollify
Their harden'd hearts, inur'd to blood and cruelty.

SPENCER.

At the celebration of a yearly festival
of the sanctuary of Santa Maria, the
H 2 grates

grates were thrown open for the admittance of strangers. Our young soldier having therefore expressed a wish to be a spectator of the solemn ceremony of the high mass, St. Orvillé, who was likewise a visitor at the castle, readily consented to accompany him.

On their entrance into the chapel, the vaulted roofs were re-echoing the sublime devotional strain "*Del Festivo d' Dio,*" then performing, replete with heavenly harmony, by the holy sisterhood. The great altar, shaded by curtains of silver tissue, decorated with wreaths of flowers, and surrounded with resplendent tapers, fumed delicious odours from its burning incense; the marble walls, beautifully ornamented with Mosaic mouldings, were divided by palisades of massive silver, adorned with the finest tapestry, and tastefully embellished with paintings of the most celebrated Italian masters. The gothic windows were likewise hung with drapery of silver tissue, and the chandeliers

liers and censers of gold, ornamented with the most precious stones, and intermingled with silver lamps, reflected a dazzling, inexpressible lustre throughout the whole of this ancient and noble edifice.

To the mind of Albert de Montauban it afforded the most exalted pleasure ; indeed, the witnessing of such a solemnity cannot fail of inspiring every beholder with the noblest feeling of the heart—gratitude towards his God. On every countenance sat the shadow of the Divinity, with benignant influence on all, save one solitary monk, who, as he kept leaning against an adjoining pillar, looked the image of Despair. To him, indeed, the soothing power of religious rites, and consolation of devotion, appeared wholly to have lost their charms, nor, for an instant, was it able to surmount the melancholy gloom which hung over his brow. The majestic figure of the man, and the singularity of

his appearance, soon arrested the attention of Montauban and his uncle. "Do you not observe," said Albert, "that poor monk by yon pillar? he seems strangely affected. On whom are his eyes fixed with such mournful aspect?"—"See you not," replied his relation, "that lady seated near the great altar, dressed in white, unveiled, and attended by one of the noviciates, who is now addressing herself to her?"—"I do, sir," answered Montauban, "and think her an angel: I never saw a more seraphic, a more angelic countenance."—"Well, then," continued St. Orvillé, "to her are they directed, whose beauty, I think with you, certainly surpasses any of mortal mould."

Before the conclusion of the service, the object of their admiration, with her companion, prepared to leave the chapel. Montauban was in an agony; one moment, thought he, and she will be lost to my sight for ever. He sprung
from

from his seat and followed her. As they gained the door which led into the interior of the monastery, from the young lady's alarm on observing she was pursued by a stranger, she let fall her crucifix. Albert instantly caught up the prize, pressed it to his bosom, and kneeling, restored the precious relic to the beautiful novice. With a sweet smile, she was going to acknowledge her thanks for his gallantry, when the monk whom Albert had before noticed rushed towards him, and snatching hold of the hand of the lady, instantly disappeared with her. The iron door then closed with violence, to seclude from his sight for ever, as he supposed, the enchanting vestal.

The impetuous youth being highly incensed at the intrusion, and the indignity he had received from the holy father, began therefore to breathe forth imprecations against him of the most sacrilegious nature; and concluding, from

the monk's gaining admittance into the convent, that he was a confessor, he loudly condemned the whole community. After some time passed in this useless indulgence of his rage, and convinced that no hope remained of again beholding the object of his admiration, Albert endeavoured to retrace his steps into the choir of the chapel, to rejoin his uncle. By the light of a single lamp, which hung over the figure of a saint, and kept glimmering at a distance, he pursued his way along one of the aisles, at the same time remarking with astonishment the sudden gloom with which the place was enveloped, when it had recently presented so splendid an appearance. Not a human creature was to be seen, nor a single footstep to be heard. The farther he advanced the more dismal and forlorn did every surrounding object appear. Albert then began to think, and not before, of the very unpleasant, the dangerous situation,
into

into which, from his imprudence, he had brought himself, for it was evident, that during his pursuit after the holy sister and her young companion, the chapel had been cleared of its votaries, and the doors closed.

Montauban then reflected on the great uneasiness his flight must have occasioned his uncle, and the anxiety his friends would entertain for his safety; well knowing, that if he was found in the sanctuary by any of the conventuals, now the service was concluded, his life would be the sacrifice. Certain danger will intimidate the most courageous heart. Albert felt ashamed of his fears, yet could not conquer them. On turning through one of the arches, he was left in total darkness. Montauban then thought it best to return and take the lamp, the light of which might perhaps discover some secret door that would extricate him out of the chapel.

In hollow murmurs, the wind resound-

ed through the long aisles and deadly vaults of the sanctuary: the faint rays of the moon, which began to be discernible from its gothic windows, only tended, however, to add fresh horrors to the scene. Funereal implements, monuments of some of the departed sisterhood of Santa Maria, and the unwieldy figures of the saints, which were placed in niches along the aisles, were the only objects to be perceived by him. In vain did he endeavour to approach the lamp; it was not again to be found; and observing, likewise, that the farther he advanced in search of it, the more gloomy, if possible, did every thing appear, Albert determined quietly to await the evil he could not avoid. He sat down on a projection of one of the columns, and fixing his eyes on a distant window, through which the moon now darted her rays with stronger lights and increasing splendour, began to invoke every good spirit to bless him once again with the sight

sight of the lady, who had so fascinated his senses that he imagined he could endure even the greatest torments with composure, and with rapture, if the reward would only be one look of pity from the woman he loved.

The bell of the convent now struck the midnight hour: shortly after, to the astonishment of Montauban, he saw the light which had before so miraculously eluded him; no longer, however, stationary, for it began to advance slowly towards that part of the sanctuary in which he was seated. Alarmed at this circumstance, Albert instantly arose, and with faltering step, receded to some distance, which enabled him to follow the lamp without danger of discovery. On turning through one of the arches, the light, however, passed him with great quickness, but not before he had sufficient time to recognize, in the person who held it, the same monk who had attracted his attention in the chapel dur-

ing service, and who had so forcibly interrupted his intercourse with the novice of Santa Maria.

The third appearance of this man, at such an hour, and near the same spot in which he had at first beheld him, struck Albert with the conviction, that the monk likewise had felt the power of her charms, and from being actuated by jealousy, was then come to satiate his revenge by assassination. Contending emotions agitated the breast of the youth, at the idea of falling by the hand of a single ruffian, with whom, had Albert been armed, by any means of defence, he would, in such a contest, have been more than equal, in point of valour, strength, and skill.

At one moment he determined to disclose himself, by mentioning his name and family, in the hope of intimidating the confessor, by daring him to the atrocious deed; at another, by some plausible story of distress, and grief at so
unjust

unjust a confinement, to move his compassion. Whilst Albert was revolving these points severally in his mind, the object of his alarm continued to move with much rapidity, and, on advancing towards an iron grate at the end of one of the cloisters, he observed him kneel on approaching the image of a saint, and on rising, to take from behind the figure a key, with which he opened the grate. Montauban drew nearer, supposing that it was a subterraneous passage which led into the mountains; but in that he was disappointed; the iron door, creaking on its hinges, an immense weight, closed with violence; the monk then descended a few steps, and, by the ray of light which fell from the lamp, Albert discovered it to be a cemetery. Every hope then vanished of effecting his escape: the confessor, on entering into that place of death, disappeared in an instant, and again was Montauban left in total darkness.

No

No gleam of moonshine then broke through the dismal structure to guide the wanderer to a place of repose; the wind, blustering through the antique windows, with mournful sound echoed along the cloisters. At intervals, groans were distinctly heard, and which seemed to issue from the cemetery. In an agony of despair, Albert then threw himself on the pavement; in that distressful situation, however, no useless repining, or violent expressions of anger, escaped his lips; and a heavy and unconquerable stupor, stealing by degrees over his senses, soon obliterated every idea of fear, by forgetfulness.

The well-known, ever-to-be-remembered maxim, which should animate every human breast, even in the most afflicting circumstances—"Rest on hope," was truly, was fully exemplified, and that in the fate of Albert de Montauban: he who on lying down on the cold stones, in momentary expectation of feeling
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the dagger of a secret assassin, on recovering his benumbed faculties, found himself in an elegant apartment, reclining on a couch, and close by his side, looking at him with the most ineffable tenderness, his mother and uncle, the countess Anselmo and her brother, St. Orvillé. This agreeable and unexpected change was hailed by the young man with every expression of joy, and great was his curiosity to learn by what fortunate occurrence he had been extricated from his perilous situation in the chapel. St. Orvillé readily complied with that wish, by acquainting Albert of his unsuccessful search, before he had ventured to return to the castle with the information of his flight from the sanctuary. Count Anselmo had thought it not improbable that, actuated by a desire of viewing the whole of the edifice, he might be in confinement there; and pointing out the danger of any person being found in the chapel after high mass

was

was concluded, had immediately determined them to depart for the monastery; and that on the arrival of the countess and himself at Santa Maria, by sending in their names to the superior, and the object of their mission, every polite accommodation was offered them, with an order from the abbess for her attendants to explore the sanctuary; which being complied with directly, they had found him in the melancholy state before described, and with their assistance he had had been brought into that apartment. After the conclusion of signior Orvillé's recital, some time yet elapsed ere they were enabled to convey Albert to Valley; feigning to be extremely indisposed, in hopes he should again be blest with a sight of the beautiful novice with whom he was already so deeply enamoured, his eyes were constantly turned towards the grate, in expectation of seeing her pass. The matin service being concluded, the nuns were
returning

returning each to their cells; with the utmost attention, Montauban viewed them as they glided by, but not one answered the least in description to her he so eagerly sought for. Disappointed, therefore, in that hope, he almost exclaimed aloud—"Visionary idea! presumptuous mortal! to expect on earth an angel!" Those sentences were not lost to the ear of his uncle, although they were to his mother, the countess being then in conversation with the superior of the convent. With much significance of look and manner, Orvillé said to his nephew, "I do not think the air of this place agrees with you; I therefore advise a speedy return to Valleroy;" which then obliged Montauban to accede to the proposition.

The midnight adventure, and confinement of Albert in the sanctuary of Santa Maria, became a subject of much conjecture to the count Anselmo; the evasive and contradictory answers of the youth,

youth, whenever questioned by him as to the motive of such temerity, created likewise his severe displeasure. Montauban perceived the alteration of the count's behaviour towards him, and therefore was the more anxious to learn the name and family of the fair incognito of the monastery, too plainly foreseeing he should not long be permitted to remain at the castle of Valleroy. Continued perseverance on the part of Albert, aided likewise by his faithful servant Lupino, soon crowned his wishes with success—her name Eleanor, and the adopted daughter of Anselmo. This latter intelligence, however, greatly depressed and agitated Montauban, being well assured, from the marked indifference, and anxiety of the count for him to enter into a military life, that his attachment for her was known to Anselmo, and disapproved of. This unpleasant reflection could not, however, prevent the youth from continually directing

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ing his steps towards the convent, and contriving, by various devices, to obtain the notice of Eleanor, by whom Albert soon flattered himself he was regarded with no small degree of partiality.

On an evening, he would sometimes repair to the walls of Santa Maria, disguised as a shepherd, and with an oaten reed begin playing the most elevated and enchanting strains of the pastoral muse. At other times, he would exchange that simple dress for the more secure one of a female pilgrim, by which he at last enjoyed the pleasure of conversing with her at the convent grate. Momentary, however, was that indulgence. Albert, fancying this religious costume would prevent suspicion, and therefore escape all observation, had, on the third morning of his admission to the monastery, persuaded the timid Eleanor to allow him to present to her, and tie round her neck, a ribbon, from which was suspended a golden heart, a token of his fidelity;

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at that instant, the same monk whom Albert had seen on the night of his confinement in the sanctuary, passed them, and hastily retired into the convent. Montauban, with much agitation, inquired of Eleanor what situation he held there? and on being informed by the lovely orphan that he was their confessor, exclaimed, with energy, "Beware of him! I know the man!"—"Not another word," she softly replied, "we are observed;" and then speaking aloud, said, "May Heaven guard you, gentle pilgrim! in my orisons you shall be remembered." Albert pressed to his lips the lovely hand of the novice in silent gratitude. Words would have been superfluous, his looks sufficiently expressed the reverence, the adoration of Montauban, for the arbitress of his fate. Eleanor sighed once more an adieu, which was responsively echoed in the heart of her lover; who then sorrowfully retraced his steps to a neighbouring

bouring cottage, where he again assumed his proper dress. The owners of it, an elderly woman and her daughter, (and the same before mentioned,) being entirely in the interest of the youth, afforded him every consolation. Floriséé, the younger, who was a vender of fruit to the convent, likewise assured Montauban that she could obtain daily intelligence of the signora, being intimately acquainted with the Beguines of Santa Maria, (an inferior order of the conventuals,) and that he might depend on her for secrecy.

On Albert's regaining the castle, he was met by the count Anselmo, who congratulated him on his appointment as lieutenant to one of the principal regiments of the Piedmontese troops; the commission had arrived that morning at Val-leroy, signed by the duke of Savoy, with an order for Montauban to join the army without delay, the service of the state requiring every possible exertion to
renew

renew and preserve its wonted splendour. This command from his sovereign he well knew must be immediately complied with; Albert, therefore, on retiring to his chamber, addressed the following letter to Eleanor, as he did not think it prudent to appear so soon again at the monastery.

“ MY BELOVED ELEANOR,

“ THE duty I owe to my country, revered Italia! bids me hasten to rescue it from the threatened grasp of a lawless invader; yet, although honour is the breastplate of a soldier, love is his protecting shield; deprived of that soul-inspiring sentiment, soon, alas! would the laurel fade and wither on the hero's brow. Listen, then, oh, listen with attention, to what my fond heart dictates for your welfare. The pen trembles in my hand; tears of anguish
fill

fill my eyes at the thought of absence, and pronouncing farewell to all my cherished hopes; those hopes, which, I now confess, sought to enslave the mind, and ungenerously draw forth, from the lips of Eleanor, a vow, which might embitter all her future days. Yet, amidst all the toils, all the hardships, to which I may be exposed, how cheerfully would they be endured, if sometimes I could receive the pleasing assurance that I was not quite forgotten by her whom my soul adores! On the return of every eve, when religion's hallowed rites call you forth to the sacred altar, will Montauban, in idea, be with his Eleanor, will dedicate it to pray for her felicity. Oh, then, let the warning voice of sincere affection entreat, conjure you, to be on your guard against pretended friendship—the name without the substance; it is of all evils the most afflicting in its consequences. The guileless heart, open, generous, and unsuspecting, is too often
found

found to be the prey of duplicity. Monastic seclusion is not always a protection to youth and beauty, for vice is the more dangerous when concealed under the specious garb of virtue.

“ To-morrow I depart from Valleroy ; deny me not then, beloved Eleanor, the melancholy satisfaction of once again seeing you, and receiving from you the fiat of my fate—the happiness, or future misery, of

“ ALBERT DE MONTAUBAN.”

This letter had a safe conductor in the young Florisee, who, concealing it amidst the flowers of an elegant bouquet, presented it to her at the convent grate ; and although Albert had no permission of the count Anselmo to renew his visit at the castle, he had one from his adopted daughter to visit Santa Maria, at some future period ; accompanied with every testimony of her regard and
veneration

veneration for the gallant soldier. Fears for the personal safety of Albert induced Eleanor, at that time, to forego the pleasure of another interview with her lover, some suspicion having arisen amongst the conventuals respecting his assumed disguise. Montauban, who had therefore been anxiously waiting at the cottage of old Florisee for the return of her daughter from the monastery, received this latter intelligence with great despondency; yet, as it conveyed to him the hope of meeting with his Eleanor at some distant period, her injunction was obeyed. The few lines which she had contrived to write with her pencil, and to send back by Florisee, containing fervent wishes for his happiness, and thanks for the very flattering deference he had expressed for her, were now then carefully folded up by Montauban, who, on concealing it in his bosom, exclaimed, "Live for ever here!"

Albert, on recompensing the female

cottagers for their services, charged them to be watchful and observant of every incident that might take place at the convent during his absence ; which they having faithfully promised to attend to, he took his departure, his mind wholly occupied with the image of the fascinating Eleanor, on the succeeding morning, for Turin ; mentally rehearsing to himself, as he proceeded on his tedious journey to the capital—"Montauban ! prove yourself worthy of your country, and the high distinction you have acquired from the object of your choice ; deserve the prize before you attempt to obtain it !" All eager then for glory, well might the youth have exclaimed, (with some slight difference,) in the words of the noble Hector—

"If I should perish, let me perish great,
And in a mighty deed expire ;
Let future ages hear it, and admire."

CHAP. X.

The mountain thunders, and its sturdy sons
Stoop to the bottom of the rocks they shade.
Lone on the midnight steep, and all aghast,
The dark wayfaring stranger breathless toils,
And, often falling, climbs against the blast.
Low waves the rooted forest, vex'd; and sheds
What of its tarnish'd honours yet remain—
Dash'd down and scatter'd by the tearing winds'
Assiduous fury, its gigantic limbs.
Thus struggling through the dissipated grove,
The whirling tempest raves along the plain,
And on the cottage thatch'd, or lordly roof,
Keen fast'ning, shakes them to the solid base.

TROMSEN.

THE following winter, during a cessation
of hostilities with the enemy, Montau-

ban procured a short leave of absence from his royal commander. With the greatest speed he set off for Tuscany, to visit the countess Anselmo, from whom, for reasons before stated, he had not received any information. The fate of Eleanor pressed likewise on his mind, with melancholy forebodings of ill fortune, not having received any account from her likewise since he had left the Apennines.

On the journey, Albert met by accident with St. Orvillé, who was travelling from Genoa to Placenza, for the purpose of renewing an intimacy with the daughter of a Venetian senator, and to obtain consent of the father for their union. Montauban, on embracing his uncle, inquired, with much agitation, after his mother. St. Orvillé instantly calmed his fears on that account, by saying he had received a letter from the countess, announcing she was in health, but unhappy, at not having heard from
her

her son, except once, since his departure. Albert was going to reply, but his uncle, anticipating his answer, said—“ I knew, and was perfectly convinced, that you would never fail in so indispensable a duty. Be on your guard ; it is needless for me to acquaint you that Anselmo is not your friend : the adventure at the monastery of Santa Maria, and your confinement there, has excited his suspicion—his alarm, for in that holy sanctuary, you well know, is secluded his beauteous *protégée*, signora Eleanor. Strange reports have been circulated at the castle respecting her birth, and near relationship to the count.” St. Orvillé, perceiving his nephew change colour at this intelligence, did not continue the subject further than entreating Albert not to appear at Valleroy, without an invitation from Anselmo, and likewise to banish from his mind, if he valued his mother’s happiness, all recollection of the noviciate of Santa Maria, as the least

indulgence of such an attachment would produce an inevitable train of evils, both on himself and family. The first part of this advice was agreed to by the young soldier with but slight opposition; the latter met with a decided negative. Montauban had pledged his faith to Eleanor, and that consideration, to a man of his honour, was as binding as if it had been pronounced before a host of witnesses. In an impressive manner, he communicated the same to his uncle, and concluded by saying with much solemnity, "You perceive, therefore, honoured sir, the destiny of Albert is irrevocably fixed, beyond the power of change, in this world; if for misery, I ever trust that I shall submit without repining at the decree of Heaven!"—"Rash youth!" exclaimed St. Orvillé, "the vow you have made must be broken;" and continued impetuously, "Who were the parents of Eleanor?"—"I know not."—"Then farewell," replied
St. Orvillé,

St. Orvillé, "I leave you to your fate!" and spurring his horse, rode off with incredible swiftness, leaving the astonished Montauban fixed to the spot like a statue. Several minutes elapsed before he could in the least reflect on the words he had uttered, to cause such great displeasure from his uncle; and when reason did return, and represent to him the occasion of it, the plighted word he had given of eternal fidelity to the orphan, surmounted, and rendered impracticable, every idea of conquering the fatal passion he had conceived for her.

With very different sensations, however, did Albert now pursue his journey to what he had done previous to the unexpected interview with his uncle. The peremptory command of St. Orvillé for him not to appear at the castle, (although his mother was suffering the utmost uneasiness, from his long absence and supposed indifference towards her,) was truly distressing. The intelligence of the

count's secret enmity, and the motive that actuated such resentment, from which he was denied even the consolation of writing to his beloved parent, likewise caused Montauban the severest anguish.

As ascending the lofty and cheerless mountains of the Apennines, often did he linger, and cast a sorrowing look on the rich track of country that lay beneath his feet—valleys clothed with ever-smiling verdure; flocks and herds peacefully ranging plains, which were profusely adorned with all the charms of pastoral landscape, to afford comfort and delight to its inhabitants. Reflecting on the contrast of the scene he had quitted to that which he was then immersing into—a dreary, wild, and barren region, pierced by the winds of every quarter, offering no shelter, no equivalent, to compensate in the least for so disagreeable a change, Albert involuntarily sighed; he fancied it represented his own untoward destiny. To divert, however, his mind from continually

ally presaging misfortune, he would sometimes descry, and point out to his servant, as they proceeded, little fertile spots, even amidst these desolate mountains, covered with vines, and enamelled with flowers, and other rare productions of nature: he would then exclaim energetically—"Such is the life of man! to whom pleasures are but in perspective, real sorrow in the ground-work." Towards evening they gained the summit of the Apennines, and could discern, although as yet but a speck in the horizon, the sun's last rays gilding the ancient structure of Santa Maria. All care and despondence vanished from the countenance of Montauban at the sight of a place in which was enclosed his heart's dearest treasure: already, in idea, had he clasped the fond maid to his bosom; and already, at her feet, again breathed forth vows of love and constancy, to the fascinating, and, to his imagination, peerless Eleanor.

Albert, knowing it was not possible to obtain admission to the convent grate at so late an hour, therefore directed his steps to the cottage of Florisee, where it was his intention to remain during the night. On entering the little dwelling, the old woman, who immediately recognized Montauban and his attendant, received them with the greatest joy; but on observing a visible alteration for the worse in the health of her benefactor, she mournfully exclaimed —“ Ah! my good lord, I am afraid you grieve for the loss of signora Eleanor?” —“ What, is she dead?” reiterated the almost-frantic lover. —“ Heaven forbid, my lord!” replied Florisee; “ our amiable lady was alive and well yesterday se’nnight; I only meant to say that she has left the convent, and gone to the castle of Rodolphus” Distracting doubts now tormented Albert at this unwelcome intelligence. It was not easy to divine the motive which could have induced

induced count Anselmo to confide her to the care of his friend, in preference to a monastery; yet, when he reflected that at the period of obtaining leave of absence from his regiment, the son of Rodolphus had procured the same, jealousy, at that instant, represented, that for Ernestine, who artfully must have contrived to gain the affections of Eleanor, he was discarded; and that her visit to the castle was only a prelude to becoming its future mistress.

This conviction, of which no doubt he thought could be entertained, racked his brain with madness; without, therefore, debating in the least what steps would be most proper to pursue, Albert remounted his horse, determining to go in quest of Eleanor, at the same time charging his servant to remain at the cottage till morning, then to commence his journey for Grosseto, and there to await his orders. Heedless of danger, he instantly set off, and travelled through

the night, along roads hardly pressed even by the foot of a passenger, every moment expecting to be precipitated from the rugged rocks into the gulphs which continually presented themselves to his sight.

At the approach of dawn, Albert was so wearied and faint, for want of rest and nourishment, that he could proceed no farther: his horse, too, which he had been obliged to lead for several miles, fell down on the road almost lifeless.

Montauban, though but ill able to exert himself, yet endeavoured to relieve the poor animal, by procuring some herbs and grass, which again enabled the faithful creature to follow his master. On observing some peasants at work in an adjoining vineyard, Albert hastened towards them, and requested their assistance. One of the vintagers, with much humanity, tendered his services, and conducted the young soldier to his dwelling, situated on the side of
the

the mountain: here he was regaled with the best the cottage could afford, and accommodated with a bed. In a few hours he arose from his humble couch, greatly refreshed; and as his horse had been likewise well taken care of, was extremely anxious to recommence his journey to Oldenzo. Sensibly impressed with the kindness he had received from the mountaineer, Albert returned a grateful acknowledgement; and on remarking how much his lot was to be envied, which seemed to be that of true content, so difficult to be met with in the busy scenes of life, the hardy veteran exclaimed—"I do indeed, my lord, enjoy that blessing; my wishes are ever moderate, therefore easily attainable. I have known better days in point of fortune, but none so happy as I now enjoy. In early life I married the woman I loved. Ninetta, as well as myself, saw enough of the world and its vicissitudes to prevent regret at our leaving it.

it. Alas!" continued the old man, "if at any time we are dull and out of spirits, it is with the thoughts of having been deprived by death of our best friends. Strange events take place sometimes with surprising quickness; so was it with us, for in one single hour, from having a good house over our heads, and a comfortable independence, we were turned adrift, in a strange country, without knowing one being that we could apply to for relief: after wandering about, therefore, from place to place, and procuring a scanty subsistence for myself and wife, by working as a gardener, Providence," repeated Zilio, with peculiar energy, "to make short of my story, directed us to this spot; and to that same old peasant whom you applied to for assistance, we are indebted for our preservation: he procured me the situation I now hold with my present master; signior Rodolphus."—"Rodolphus!" eagerly interrupted Albert;

bert; "do you mean Rodolphus of Odenzo?"—"Yes, my lord, he is my master." And on inquiring how far from thence to the castle? his informant answered, "Within half a league." With apparent indifference, Montauban then asked if the son of Rodolphus was at the castle? which was likewise replied to in the affirmative, and that he might have had the pleasure (Zilio supposing that Albert was acquainted with him) of seeing the young signior, if a few minutes sooner, he having but just before left the vineyard. An interview, however, under such circumstances, would have wounded the pride of Montauban, who felt, therefore, extremely gratified to have escaped so humiliating a rencounter. Yet, if the foregoing intelligence excited surprise, and inwardly agitated the lover, how much the more was it when, during the relation of the mountaineer, he learnt that Ernestine was accompanied by count Anselmo; and, on inquiring if there

there was any other visitants at the castle? the answer obtained was in the negative! "Are you sure of that?" said Albert.— "Quite sure, my lord," repeated Zilio, "for my wife daily attends at Oldenzo, and if there had been any other visitor besides the count, I should undoubtedly have heard of it."

Montauban now deeply lamented the precipitancy in which he had left Santa Maria, without further information than that so hastily acquired from the old cottager, whose loquacity, perhaps, might have unthinkingly revealed his attachment for Eleanor, and therefore been the cause of her strict confinement in the convent. To ascertain the truth of which, however, no means presented itself; his leave of absence being so nearly expired, the only expedient he thought at all practicable was, to return without delay, by the same road, and on meeting with his servant, to order him to remain for some days in the vicinity of
of

of Santa Maria, in hopes of Lupino's learning the real abode of Eleanor, and, if successful, to present her with a letter which Albert previously had written (expressing the fears he entertained of being forgotten) for the lovely recluse, before he commenced his journey ; then having doubts on his mind whether he should be able to obtain a personal interview. This point once determined upon, Montauban lost no time to carry it into execution ; he generously rewarded his host for the trouble he had occasioned him, and again remounted his horse, to traverse the dreary mountains of the Apennines.

In a few hours after his departure, the far-extended prospect became on a sudden wrapt in gloom, quickly enveloping every object with the hazy vapour. The mind of Montauban had been so occupied in devising plans for the future, that the present was totally disregarded ; darkness increasing, and the
terrific

terrific howling of the wolves, which, under cover of the night, were beginning to descend from the higher parts of the mountains in search of prey, at length aroused Albert from his reverie ; he then found, to his great astonishment, that he was pursuing a different track to that which he had taken on the preceding day ; the road led into a vale, which, with the torrents of melted snow from the heights, and long channels of sand, appeared like one continual sea ; and on the other side, although at a greater distance, the swelling surges of the Mediterranean beat against the rocks with increasing fury. The wind became so extremely boisterous, together with the pelting of the rain, which soon began to pour in torrents, the surrounding country now rendered any further progress of descending the Apennines totally impracticable. Albert, therefore, with difficulty, re-ascended the mountain, and for several hours wandered along its
barren

barren wilds, without finding the least shelter to protect him from the inclemency of the night. At length, however, he perceived a light, but which, from its immense altitude, appeared at first a constellation in the heavens; yet, on drawing nearer to it, he had the satisfaction to observe that the light proceeded from a beacon tower.

The track Montauban fortunately pursued was the only one which led to it with safety, and on turning suddenly a point of the mountain, it brought him close under the structure. To the left of the tower stood a castle, which, although it bore many marks of the ravages of time, yet possessed sufficient remains to indicate its former grandeur. Albert truly rejoiced that he had at last discovered a human habitation in this desolate region, and continued his course thither. On arriving at its massy gates, he knocked several times for admittance. The sound re-echoed along the

the whole pile of the building, which seemed to pronounce its being quite deserted. On repeating the knocks with greater loudness, Montauban distinctly heard the unbarring of doors, and momentarily expected to see the gates thrown open; in that, however, he was disappointed, for in a few minutes all was again silent. Albert now concluded, that fear overpowering, prevented its possessors from exerting the rights of hospitality, and that all hopes were at an end of inducing them, therefore, to compassionate the sufferings of the wandering, despairing stranger. Albert, therefore, remounted his horse, to traverse again the trackless plains. The dismal cry of a cormorant, which at that moment flew over the walls of the castle, followed directly by two others, caught his attention. The night was not so dark to prevent Montauban's observing that they settled on a column of a mouldering arch, near the eastern side
of

of the building. The noise of the birds effected what Albert had been unable to accomplish ; a man with lights appeared at one of the upper windows of the castle. Once again, therefore, he knocked at the gates ; and then a voice, the sound of which apparently coming in that direction, vociferated—" Who's there ?" —" An unfortunate stranger," replied Montauban, " claims your humanity." —" What is it you want ?—answer me quickly, or I shall be off again," demanded the voice.

" On my journey to Loretto," mentioning any place that came first to his recollection, " I have lost my way, and being benighted, cannot resume the right path without information. I likewise die for hunger and want of rest. Oh, pity, then, my distress," continued Albert, " and grant me a few hours shelter from the storm." No answer was returned to this petition, but shortly after, the iron gates, creaking on their hinges,

hinges, an immense weight, began to open, and the same man whom he had observed at the window made his appearance. Perceiving by the dress and manner of Albert that his credulity was not imposed on, he accosted him with —“ You are welcome, signior, to come in here for an hour or two, but no longer, or I should pay dearly for my kindness towards you.” The porter having then exacted a solemn promise of his new guest to depart by the dawn of day, he led his horse into the court-yard, and after closing the gates with much caution, and securely fastening them, conducted the young soldier into the interior of the castle. As they passed through the hall, which was supported by several noble columns of marble, Montauban remarked to his attendant that it had the appearance of an armoury, fire-arms being hung round the walls in every direction. “ Ah, signior,” replied the man, significantly winking at Albert,

Albert, "there is indeed enough of them to supply a whole regiment, but they are a sort of playthings I have no fancy for; yet, if they could speak, I warrant me they'd tell strange tales of their former masters. Come, come, now," continued the facetious porter, "sit you down, my brave lad, whilst I go bring some sticks to make a fire, for you seem completely drenched with the rain, and then I will tell you a good story." Montauban, therefore, (although not quite at ease in his new habitation,) seated himself by the dying embers of a wood fire, at the extremity of the hall; and being quite exhausted with fatigue and disappointment, fell into a sound sleep.

In the meanwhile, the porter returned; and having industriously prepared a supper of bread and fruit, trimmed the lamp, and mended the fire, he awoke his hungry guest, to partake of the fare provided for him, and to relate the account of the castle. Albert, greatly refreshed
by

by the short repose he had indulged himself with, began, therefore, to listen attentively for the promised information. The man had scarcely commenced ere the alarm-bell sounded with tremendous violence. "Is it so, my good fellow?" replied he; and without uttering another word, he ran across the hall, took down a gun from one of the recesses, and almost flew up a winding staircase on the eastern side of the hall, apparently in the greatest affright and terror. This strange and sudden disappearance of the porter, without signifying in the least his intention, caused much surprise to Montauban, who now thought a retreat from his present situation the most advisable. That no time should be lost to escape from the castle, which he then concluded was a receptacle for robbers, Albert took the lamp from the table, to discover the bolts, and unlock the door which led into the court-yard. A confused noise was now heard in the upper
apartments

apartments of the building ; Montauban, therefore, expecting every moment to be attacked by some of the banditti, and observing a sword suspended over the fireplace, armed himself with that weapon, and then endeavoured to unfasten the door. Before he could accomplish his purpose, however, people with lighted torches were seen to descend the winding staircase. Albert then extinguished the lamp, and resolutely awaited their reproach. " One of them is here," said a voice, which he well knew to be that of the porter.—" Smooth-faced villain !" ejaculated Montauban, " I dare you to the combat ; come on, I am prepared for your dastardly set." His opponents, however, advanced but slowly. " Come on, I say," he repeated with fury, " and I will make mince-meat of you !" A blaze of light now illuminated the hall, and in an instant afterwards, one of the men, distinguished above the rest by his dignified appear-

ance and superior dress, rushed past them, saw Albert, and being armed with a loaded pistol, directed it at his breast and fired. The ball, however, fortunately missed Montauban, who then instantaneously rushed at his antagonist, and with the sword he had taken was just going to return the vengeance of his adversary, when the same man who had admitted Albert into the castle arrested his arm, and cried out—"Hold, signior; is it thus you repay my kindness towards you, by attempting the life of my defenceless master, signior Rodolphus?" The sword now fell from the nerveless hand of Montauban, astonishment having fettered every sense, and rendered powerless the hitherto undaunted Albert. Rodolphus perceiving his agitation, and that he had surrendered himself at discretion, immediately ordered two of the servants to take their prisoner to the north tower, and there confine him, until they should receive his further orders

for

for the punishment of the delinquent. Montauban resolving, therefore, to suffer every torture, rather than to disclose himself to the haughty Rodolphus, was then unresistingly led by the servile attendants to his destined prison.

How unaccountable, how mysterious, are the ways of Providence! untoward fate had now consigned Albert into the power of a man, for whom, although unknown to him, he entertained the utmost aversion, whom he so much dreaded to meet, and whom he so much wished to avoid, not merely from private pique, or public report, which was by no means favourable to the character of Rodolphus, but from the simple circumstance of his being the friend of count Anselmo, whose consummate art, as he imagined, had drawn his mother into an alliance from which he foreboded she would suffer years of misfortune. To be thus thrown on the mercy of his supposed enemies, to be dragged, perhaps,

into the presence of Anselmo, whom he had learned from the vintager was then a visitant in those domains, to undergo the scrutiny and reprehension of the husband of his mother, who might probably exercise a parental authority, exacting from him an implicit obedience to whatever he chose imperiously to dictate, was distraction to the mind of the proud offspring of the late general de Montauban. "Spirit of my noble sire!" exclaimed Albert, at the departure of his gaolers, who had doubly locked and barred the entrance of the prison chamber, to prevent his escape—"Spirit of my noble sire! oh, teach me to emulate thy transcendant virtues! ever guide my wandering steps in the paths of honour, and undauntedly will I brave every impending danger!"—Cruel remembrance then brought forcibly to the mind of Montauban the happy days of childhood, passed under a paternal roof, when wearied with the toils of war, the general would, at evening

ing hour, retire from the noise of a camp, to seek repose and happiness in the bosom of his family. Young as Albert then was, yet well did he remember, and ever cherish, the fond endearments he had received from his father; who would repeat, whilst folding him in his arms—"Happy Montauban, blest with such a son, you have not a wish ungratified!" That sentence now rushed to his recollection, whilst mournfully he exclaimed—"Oh, beloved and ever-to-be-lamented parent, how would your proud heart swell with anger, could you witness the indignity that son now suffers—that son who will rather die than state his motive for seeking shelter in so inhospitable a mansion!" The gallant soldier wept to the memory of time past. The impulse of paternal affection in some degree subsided, Albert breathed a sigh to Eleanor; then throwing himself on a couch, determined quietly to await the return of morning, which he

K 3

thought

thought must elucidate the mysterious proceedings of Rodolphus, and procure a release from this unjust confinement.

CHAP. XI.

'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes
Their progress in the road of science; blinds
The eye of discovery, and begets,
In those that suffer it, a sordid mind.

COWPER.

At the dawn of day, Montauban arose
from his restless slumbers, to survey
more closely the apartment of his prison,
in hopes of discovering some means of
escaping from the power of Rodolphus.
The furniture of the room displayed
marks of faded splendour; the gilded
K 4 roof,

roof, black and gold velvet hangings, a canopied couch, and a few moth-eaten chairs and sofas, were now, however, its principal ornaments. Looking through the windows, which were secured by heavy bars of iron, Albert observed, with surprise, several men on guard along the ramparts, which were so extensive as to resemble the outworks of a citadel. Groves of the towering pine and hardy fir shaded the castle, but which, for the greater part, appeared to be in ruins. Beyond that, the eye was led to a trackless scene of barren plains and rocks, and bounded by mountains of snow, that at length closed the cheerless prospect. In vain did Albert try to discover the path that so unfortunately led him to this gloomy structure, from which he had not only been prevented meeting with his servant, but had likewise lost all clue to guide him to the abode of Eleanor, concerning whom, and the younger Rodolphus, Albert reflected on with the
most

most tormenting jealousy, supposing that Ernestine had purposely eluded her from his sight for ever.

In an agony, therefore, of mind, Montauban, for several hours, kept pacing his chamber, in endeavouring to find out some concealed pannel or door to effect his escape; none, however, presented itself. On removing the canopied couch, fancying that an outlet might be there, although extremely heavy, yet, from its mouldering state, it dropt instantly with great weight on the floor, and an old framed picture, that had been suspended behind it, likewise fell with it, and was broken to pieces. Montauban took up the painting, to examine it; and clearing the canvas from the dust, although much torn and mutilated, saw that it represented the scene after a battle. A most prominent feature in the piece was that of a dying warrior, supported by several officers, on whose countenances grief was finely portrayed.

x 5

portrayed. The lighter sketches consisted of their soldiers burying the dead, and women wailing over the senseless corpses of their husbands or friends, whilst some more hardened than others were employing themselves in carrying off the spoil.

This painting so much arrested the attention of Albert, that he did not hear the unbarring of the door of his prison, nor even look up until it was opened, when the first person that caught his eye, on entering the chamber, was Ernestine Rodolphus, followed by his father and his servant Lupino. The joy of the poor fellow at meeting with his master is not easily to be expressed; he clasped his hands together, and falling on his knees, returned thanks to Heaven for Montauban's preservation. Surprise, however, at these unexpected visitants, mingled with the utmost dignity and indifference, was apparent in the countenance of Albert. The son of Rodolphus, as he approached

proached him, bowed; this from the exasperated young soldier met a slight return in silence, and instantly directed his attention to the picture; whilst the elder Rodolphus, to conceal the displeasure he felt, and mortification he experienced at the *sang froid* of Albert, had already left the tower.

Ernestine then, with seeming concern, addressed Montauban to the following effect:—"That his confinement (his father not having the honour of being personally known to him) had arisen from the confusion and terror of the domestics, supposing the castle was attacked again by the banditti, who, for some time past, had infested the domains in hopes of plunder; that Eris, the porter, who had undertaken to afford him shelter until the storm abated, on hearing the alarm bell, imagined his credulity imposed on, and that he had admitted a robber." At that word Albert started, and would have replied to the

insulting epithet, had not the young Rodolphus continued with—" Pardon me, Montauban, but you are too rash, too much alive to your honour, and think it wounded, when not an idea of the kind is intimated or intended. I repeat my words, therefore, that he took you to be one of the banditti, and actuated by such a supposition, instantly informed my father, who thought proper you should be secured. To be brief, however, with my relation, as I perceive, Montauban, your feelings are agitated from the indignity you fancy you have received," continued he, " I now then acquaint you, that the events of the preceding night originated through the fear of your servant, who supposed you to be hostilely detained by us. Chance (as Lupino has since informed me) directed him to our vintager's cottage, from which, it appears, you had but just departed. On recounting over a cheerful glass, the object of his mission to the neighbourhood of Grossetto—"

setto—" At this account of Rodolphus, Albert's designs, he knew, were, by that unfortunate disclosure, frustrated; Ernestine smiled, therefore, and pausing for a moment, the enraged Montauban exclaimed "Go on, signior!"—"Well then," he replied, "by that intelligence, the vintager was enabled to impart every requisite information, accompanied, no doubt, with other idle village tales, calculated only to inspire terror into the breast of the ignorant. With the assistance, therefore, of a few peasants, to whom, it seems, Lupino had imparted his fears of your personal danger, they sallied forth, and like true knights-errant, determined to rescue you."—"Egregious fools!" reiterated Montauban.—"Draw not a reflection on their exploit," continued Ernestine, laughing, till you hear the conclusion. "On arriving at the eastern side of the castle, which is uninhabited, they inquired of the centinel if any stranger had

had

had been lately admitted into it? the soldier, not prepared, however, or not disposed to answer this interrogative, they immediately knocked him down; and then another, not far distant, came to the affray, and on perceiving the assailants of his comrade, fired, but on missing, these desperadoes, with their bludgeons, knocked him down also; our valiant guards then," said the young Rodolphus, in an ironical tone, "being thus defeated, a loud shout from the conquerors announced their brilliant victory, who were proceeding to other acts of violence, had not their uproar occasioned a general alarm throughout the domains, and arrested their progress. I," continued Ernestine, "was the first drawn by the sound of their voices into the field of battle, when, judge my surprise, Montauban, I saw Lupino, whom, by the light of a taper, I instantly recognized, standing triumphantly over the fallen soldier,

(the

(the other you'll observe had run away,) and heard him denouncing vengeance, if he did not immediately acquaint him with the fate of his master, who, he was sure, had been inveigled into the castle by his hellish crew."—"I have no patience with such a blockhead."—"You must, then," replied Ernestine, "till you hear the end of his career, for it was then nearly finished. I then ordered that he should be instantly secured by my attendants; and Lupino now finding himself deserted by the rest of his gallant companions, who, on hearing the alarm bell, had thought it advisable to make a hasty retreat from the scene of action, disclosed the whole affair, and falling on his knees, prayed for mercy, and to be permitted to join his master. After some further investigation of so singular a proceeding, I lost no time in acquainting my father of the mistake he was under respecting you, Montauban; and as this unpleasant adventure

has

has originated through the fears of your servant concerning your personal safety, I trust you'll pardon him, and at the same time accept an apology from my father, which he particularly desires should be made in his name, with an offer likewise of every accommodation for pursuing your journey." Albert, however, mortified beyond expression at the disclosure of the above account, related with such scrupulous exactness by the son of Rodolphus, in apparent irony, and triumph at the cause of it, so fatal to the future hopes of Montauban, in regard to Eleanor, that he could scarcely recover himself sufficiently to return thanks for so prolix an explanation. The poor culprit, Lupino, with suppliant looks, now entreated to be pardoned: "I would have instantly discharged you, sirrah, for your audacity," exclaimed the offended Albert, "had not this gentleman so powerfully pleaded in your behalf; to him, therefore, are you indebted

indebted for my lenity towards you." Ernestine Rodolphus now again interfered, and said—"Montauban, as you must be convinced that the conduct of your servant proceeded entirely from a faithful attachment and anxiety for your safety, I pray you, therefore, wound him no more with reproaches, but permit me to desire the poor fellow to make the best of his way towards the kitchen, and there to regale himself after his knight-errantry, whilst I have the pleasure of conducting you into the saloon, likewise with the same intention, to refresh yourself before you recommence your journey."

Albert readily consented to the first proposition, and would have offered no objection to the latter, had he been assured of the absence of the count Anselmo; and the more especially so, because it might possibly have led to some information respecting Eleanor; he declined, however, accepting the invitation,

tion, for the former reason ; and Lupino having now returned from his short repast, informed his master that every thing was ready for his departure. Montauban, therefore, hastily embraced this opportunity of leaving his prison-chamber, to avoid hearing any more apologies from the young Rodolphus, who had already been so profuse. Ernestine, on following him to the gates of the castle, said, " Whither are you bound for, Montauban ?"—" Savoy."—" I shall soon follow you then," continued he, " and had not an angel detained me in Tuscany, should have been with my regiment long before this, I assure you." These words struck like a dagger to the heart of Montauban ; before that sentence, Albert began to think favourably of his supposed rival ; but now every softer feeling instantly vanished, to give place to the destructive passion of an implacable resentment ; turning to his servant, however, as he mounted his horse,

horse, to conceal the emotions of anger so visibly marked on his countenance, Montauban said, "Are you acquainted with the road we are to take, Lupino?"—"I am, my lord." Albert replied to Ernestine's rhapsodical exclamation, "You have bartered honour to be admitted into paradise then, so fare you well, Rodolphus." Without waiting for an answer, Montauban now rode off, followed by Lupino, who was soon at a distance from the dreaded confines of the castle of Oldenzo.

The day proved fine, and the sun shone with uncommon brilliancy, reflecting innumerable stars on the ice-topped mountains, whose crested summits Albert at length left, after several hours travelling, for the milder climate of the valleys, where the seasons of the year lavish all their beauty and perfection. The shelving sides of the transparent Arno were clothed with woods of olive and almond trees, and the plains
embalmed

embalmed with herbs, and odorific flowers, which encircled themselves through extensive vineyards, and fragrant groves of orange.

Such delightful scenes as these must tend to cheer and renovate the drooping heart; Albert, therefore, felt its genial influence; and for the first time since he had departed from the castle of Rodolphus, began to question Lupino if the track they were then in led to the monastery of Santa Maria?—"Santa Maria, my lord?" he answered with surprise; "I thought you proposed going into Savoy."—"That is my ulterior intention. What intelligence did you acquire there, after my departure?"—"I heard, my lord, that the lady Eleanor," said Lupino, with much hesitation, "was not gone to Oldenzo; madame Rodolphus and her daughter visited the convent about that time, and as the young signora had not been seen since, my lord, Florisee concluded that she had
gone

with them ; however, it was not so, for I learnt by her, when she returned home in the evening, that signora Eleanor was still in the monastery, but strictly confined in her cell, by order of their confessor, one Lodovico, I think she called him, and no person but the abbess permitted to visit her on any account whatever."

This news imparted the deepest sorrow into the breast of the lover. "And where is count Anselmo?" inquired the dejected Albert. "I thought, my lord, you knew by Zilio, the vintager, that the count was with Rodolphus; at least he told me so," said Lupino, continuing, "or I am sure I should never have thought of knocking the centinel down for not letting me into the castle; because I do firmly believe, my lord, that the count bears you a mortal hatred, and would do you an injury, if there was no chance of its being found out." The honest fellow would have been very loquacious, by which Albert might have learnt

learnt some useful information, if he had suffered him to continue; but having instantly silenced Lupino, by saying—“No reflections on the character of count Anselmo, I command you,” he therefore followed Montauban without uttering a single word, until they came to a turning of the road—“To the right, my lord,” he respectfully said, “leads to Santa Maria.”

“The fellow’s mad—what have I to do at Santa Maria, sirrah?” Poor Lupino thought if *he* was deprived of his senses, certainly his master was no less so, having so instantaneously altered his intention. Montauban, however, being now well convinced of the inutility of attempting to procure an interview with Eleanor, thought it more advisable to pursue his route towards Savoy, where having at length arrived, he rejoined his regiment; and in active duty found some relief from the tormenting anxiety of a hopeless passion.

In

In a short time after Albert's return to the seat of war, Ernestine Rodolphus likewise appeared there ; the former mutual coolness between these two young officers had greatly increased, from their late rencounter in Tuscany ; and the signal marks of royal favour which Montauban particularly received about that period, tended to foment, rather than diminish, the jealousy of Rodolphus, who on all occasions strove to lessen that fame which Albert, by his bravery, had so justly merited and acquired. He would often comment on, and treat with ridicule, Montauban's affection for the *protégée* of count Anselmo ; at the relation of which intelligence Ernestine did not scruple to mention his authors—Lodovico, and his father, signior Rodolphus ; and that he well knew the lady had been, for several years, betrothed to a particular friend of her guardian. At other times, he would cast reflections on the personal character of Albert, denominating

nominating him that of a true courtier, humble and cringing to his superiors, but insolent and overbearing to those who were in an ordinary sphere of life. These unfriendly opinions of Rodolphus, in regard to Albert, were related to him by a brother officer; and as such informations seldom lose in weight by repetition, Montauban instantly waited on his unjust accuser, and warmly remonstrated on his unfriendly conduct. Words grew so high between them, that (as before stated) a duel was the consequence, and the event of which determined Ernestine to retire again from his military career into Tuscany.

It was on Montauban's attendance at the council at Turin that by chance he heard of Anselmo being shortly expected in that city; and through the kindness of his royal commander, had obtained permission to visit his mother, during the interim of her husband's absence. On his arrival at Valleroy, he therefore
had

had the good fortune to be apprized of the departure of the count for Piedmont. Every circumstance then seemed to conspire to render his stay there agreeable; and no language can sufficiently convey the delightful sensations that occupied the breast of Albert, when he heard from the lips of his revered parent that the object of his love had been committed to her protection. Past sorrows were forgotten—all his fears, his anxiety, his jealousy, all were at that moment obliterated from his memory; and every thought instantly employed to be enabled to trace the steps of the fugitive. The cottage of Florisee came first to his recollection, as being the most likely place of Eleanor's retreat. Nor was he disappointed, for on pursuing his way thither, the younger Florisee met him, whose surprise and pleasure at seeing Albert could only be augmented by hearing that he had been at Vallerøy,

and was then coming, at the desire of his mother, to search for Eleanor.

“ Dear, dear, my lord,” said the poor girl, “ how happy I am then to tell you that the signora is at our cottage ! I shall have no occasion to go now to the castle, to inform my lady, the countess, that signora Eleanor is safe, and is coming to Valleroy as soon as she is recovered from her very great fright that she received at the cavern ;” and continued —“ indeed, my lord, I cannot say how glád I am to meet with you, because I expected nothing less than to see the same ghost that signora Eleanor did this evening ; if mother had not commanded me to wait on the countess, the whole world should not have persuaded me to go any more to Valleroy, I assure you that, my lord.” —“ Well then,” replied Albert, smiling, “ do you return home, my good girl, with as much speed as possible, and apprize Eleanor
of

of my coming to be her conductor thither." A second entreaty was not wanting to excite the young cottager to execute his commission. With the lightness of a sylph, therefore, Florisee bounded over the mountains, to communicate to them her glad tidings; and as Montauban was fearful his unexpected arrival might increase the alarm of Eleanor, he gently followed, to allow time for the disclosure.

The night was calm and beautiful; a full moon was ranging, in tranquil majesty, the blue ether; the vesper-bell of Santa Maria vibrated through the rocks, with mournful, yet not unpleasant sound; and the gothic walls of the monastery, partially illumined by the resplendent planet, added sublimity to the surrounding scene of sacred inspiration.

On drawing nearer the cottage, the delighted Albert saw the form of Eleanor and Florisee gliding through the trees

that embosomed this humble dwelling, apparently hastening to meet him. As they approached, Montauban dismounted from his horse, and eagerly exclaimed—"So very kind, thus to welcome me!" Although the tone in which he spoke was extremely low and inarticulate, it was not lost to the ear of Eleanor, who, whilst tremblingly repeating his name likewise, with confused joy, she was folded in the arms of her lover. Albert then kissed away the tears which bedewed her cheeks, and expressed, in the most tender terms, the felicity he experienced at being again restored to her, after so long and painful an absence. Eleanor could not but feel flattered by these testimonies of regard and solicitude for her welfare; yet a natural timidity, inseparable to true affection, kept her silent, and fearful of acknowledging those sentiments of a mutual passion, which she justly reflected might consign her too much into the power of
the

the youth she loved, and prove destructive to her peace of mind hereafter.

Montauban, however, was not well satisfied with this tacit approval of the affection of Eleanor; the natural warmth of his temper, and the sensibility with which he was possessed, conspired to awaken the doubts before entertained respecting the sincerity of her attachment. Albert now fixed his eyes on Eleanor, with that kind of inquiry which extremely abashed her, and was instantly construed by the young soldier as unfavourable to all his hitherto-expected happiness: he therefore released the hand of the lovely girl, which he had taken with so much pleasure, and said, with more respect, though less fervently —“ Shall I have the honour, madam, of attending you to Valleroy ? ” —“ Unkind Montauban ! ” reiterated the now-offended Eleanor, “ to ask of me such a question, when you must well know the anguish I have suffered, at being for a mo-

ment separated from my beloved friend, the countess Anselmo." The vexation that Albert felt from her reception of him, was softened by this declaration of attention to his revered mother. They had before been unthinkingly continuing their way to the cottage; now, however, he thought proper to dismiss Florisee, with a suitable present for her goodness, and obeyed the mandate of Eleanor to conduct her to the castle.

As they proceeded thither, Eleanor began, with that frankness which was so natural to her, to relate the cause of her flight from the cavern; but that, Montauban said, had been already related to him by his mother—"No, rather tell me," replied the impetuous youth, "the event which has released you from a monastery?" With hesitation she answered—"I have been ill, very ill, for many weeks past, and therefore my guardian has consigned me to the care of his benevolent lady until I am recovered."—

"Only

“Only till then?”—“I know not to the contrary,” replied the dejected Eleanor, to whom this latter question had renewed the uncertainty of her future fate, and forcibly recalling to her memory the forlorn condition of an orphan, even under the most prosperous circumstances in life, suffused her eyes with tears.

“The cause of your illness, my love,” continued Albert, “has then proceeded from your unjust confinement, and for which you are indebted to the confessor Lodovico, whose cruelty——”—“Pardon me,” she replied, “if I say that you have been wrong informed; and as an extenuation of the strictness with which our confessor exercises his authority, I must acquaint you, that it arises from his due observance of the forms of our church, and his great piety; the mind of Lodovico is torn with inward anguish, and it has been a subject of

surprise amongst the conventuals, that he can continue to exist under such a pressure of mental agony, seldom allowing himself an interval of rest to sooth his perturbed imagination." To Montauban's question, of hearing the person of that inquietude? Eleanor answered—"I have more than once requested of sister Cecilia to relate Lodovico's history, but she evinced so much real agitation, and such marked displeasure at my curiosity, that I determined (highly prizing her friendship) never to repeat such a wish in future: the rest of the nuns appear equally desirous of eluding any conversation respecting the confessor; all, therefore, that I could learn from them was, that Lodovico had not always been accustomed to the seclusion of a cloister, had witnessed extensive scenes in life, and——been very unfortunate; they would then conclude by saying—' Seek, therefore, to know
no

no more, Eleanor but rest assured that our beloved confessor commands our united pity."

"Lull not yourself into security by their insidious doctrine," eagerly replied Montauban, "their pretended asseverations; Lodovico may be a saint in outward demeanour, yet at heart a hypocrite. Believe me, his time is not always dedicated to prayer; the confessor has not numbered forty years; his animated countenance, fine form, and eyes that at once, by their keen expression, dart conviction on his discourse, has no doubt many proselytes, whilst inwardly he may be a rank voluptuary. It was Lodovico," ejaculated the lover, with rising anger at the idea, "that solicited count Anselmo to have you immured, Eleanor, within the walls of a convent; it was Lodovico who acquainted your guardian of my attachment towards you; and it is this man, this pretended devotee of religious forms,

who now seeks, and hopes to accomplish, the design of dragging you an immolated victim to the altar—to seclude you for ever in the deep and cheerless gloom of monastic apathy. Rise, therefore, superior, Eleanor, to the danger that's impending over you," continued Montauban, with the utmost emotion; "be nobly resolute; the attribute most acceptable to God is a life passed in active virtue, not in passive duty towards an omniscient Creator; fly then from a country that offers no equivalent for the loss of your freedom; seek for refuge in a kinder region, where liberty is acknowledged to be a birth-right, and every inhabitant enjoys the fruits of it. For your sake, my Eleanor, I will be myself an alien; will, on the olive-branch of peace revisiting my native land, follow you to the farthestmost parts of the globe; consent to be mine by the holy ties of our church, let me be your protector, and then who will be so happy,

so

so supremely blest, as Albert de Montauban !”

“ Ah ! where,” replied the weeping girl, “ would you have me seek for refuge, young as I am, ignorant of foreign customs, and without a friend (if I displease the count Anselmo) to succour or advise me in so forlorn a situation ?”

“ England, my love !” he exclaimed, with fervour, “ is the country that will offer you an asylum ; in that protected isle, the stranger and unfortunate, of whatever nation or state they may happen to belong, receives succour, aid, and support. To Britain, then, would I consign you, and into the arms of a revered relation now resident there, a sister of my mother, who many years since was united to an English gentleman of the name of Stanmore, a particular friend of her brother, St. Orvillé.— It was a happy union,” sighed Albert, as he reflected how different would be

his fate, if unsuccessful in his present suit; "for Olivia loved Stanmore with the tenderest affection; he too merited the treasure he had acquired, for to the most brilliant intellectual qualities is joined an universal philanthropy; the widow, the stranger, and the orphan, are blest by his munificence, and hail him as their guardian angel."

"Tempt me not, Montauban," interrupted Eleanor with firmness; "tempt me not to a dereliction of my duty, by such sweet dreams of promised felicity: let reason, not passion, direct our pursuits; and then, however tempestuous the troubled sea of life may prove, peace shall waft us to a happy shore at last. Reflect but for a moment," she continued, "the obligations I owe to count Anselmo; it is true he was forced to take me under his protection; yet that could have only actuated him till the period that his personal safety was out of danger: when that was secured,
no

no longer was there any compulsion to induce the count to adhere to the imperious demand of my father, (if the man who delivered me into his hands, deserting me at such a tender age, can be called as such); no, there was none: from his natural compassion and generosity, therefore, (which is ever inherent in the noble mind,) from these alone am I indebted solely for my present existence; and would you have me return such goodness with base ingratitude?"

The lover, although not well convinced by these arguments of the impracticability of his proposition, yet thought it most advisable to defer urging it till some more favourable opportunity should present itself. The ancient turrets of Valleroy, frowning with majestic grandeur, now appeared to view, and thither Montauban and Eleanor continued their way in mutual silence, except being now and then broken by the deep-drawn sighs of Albert,

bert, that could not avoid being infectious to his companion, and causing her real sorrow, which the following events of that night was by no means calculated to allay.

CHAP. XII.

Glory is like a circle in the water,
Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself,
Till by broad spreading it disperse to nought.

SHAKESPEARE.

RESUMING the narrative of count Anselmo, whom we have before mentioned as having arrived at the castle of Oldenzo, and from the private conference of that evening between the friends, and the unpleasant communication he had received from Rodolphus, had so deeply agitated his mind, as to cause even a momentary derangement of intellect. In that melancholy state, the count had risen from his bed, to prepare for his instantaneous

instantaneous departure to Turin; to expedite that intention, he resolved to pursue the rest of his journey on horseback, without waiting for his attendants; for whom he left orders that they might proceed at their leisure.

As Anselmo pursued his route through Piedmont, and on entering the precincts of its capital, many a recollection, painful to his mind, arose of past occurrences. How unlike is the present with the past! truly uncertain are all the events of life; and how unforeseen do these crowd on us! Mortifying to his pride must it then have been to reflect upon his former grandeur, and the present humiliating change—he who had never before returned to this place without receiving, if possible, additional homage—he whom the people always flocked in crowds to see, and to extol the man whom they emphatically styled the saviour of their country, and whom they almost worshipped as a god—him
whose

whose name even their children were taught, in their first accents, to lisp its praise, and then, preceded by these young embryos of a flourishing state, these future defenders of its glory, have strewn with flowers the streets through which he passed, and crowned, as a memento of a nation's love and gratitude, the brows of their hero with unfading laurel. Mark the reverse ! behold him now forsaken, neglected, and despised ! How unstable, how transitory, is popular favour ! which has oftener proved rather a misery than a blessing to him that has possessed it ; seldom founded on judgment or sound reason, and therefore can never be lasting ; a delirium of the brain for the moment, fatal to those whose minds are dazzled by such false illusions, or deceitful phantoms ; a loud clamour is raised, under the stale pretence of redressing some grievance, of which the poor in every state complain, who invariably suppose themselves oppressed by the rich :

rich : this mania soon becomes of an extent truly alarming ; the prime mover of these proceedings is adored by the infatuated multitude with the most wild enthusiasm ; thousands repair to the standard of their favourite ; they wade through blood to exalt him ; they sacrifice the lives and property of the peaceable and well-disposed at the shrine of that mistaken idol called liberty, but which, in fact, is only another expression for anarchy and confusion, and ending generally in complete subjugation and unlimited slavery. In forwarding this supposed good, they are in their opinions overbearing, insolent, and despotic : when power is engrafted on ignorance, all modest and private virtues are hurled from the scene of action—all sense, all religion, is discarded from their tribunal. But lo ! fallacious hope ! no sooner does this favoured champion of their rights and liberties possess himself of all this proffered confidence, than flattered by
success,

success, he grasps at universal sway, and subjects the credulous multitude to abject slavery : for a time even should a return of reason glance on the minds of his deluded followers that they have been woefully disappointed in their expectations, they are ashamed, they dare not at once acknowledge the error into which they have fallen ; the fuel of revenge, however, lays rankling in their breasts, which a single breath blows into a flame, and then is their former idol sacrificed to the manes of those whose blood they had so lamentably, so unjustly shed, for his unwarrantable and individual ambition.

Some slight shaded difference excepted, such was the situation of the count Anselmo at this period. The mysterious and the sudden death of the general de Montauban in the prison of Oristagni, and the count's marriage with Almeria, before the second year of her widowhood had expired, was an event that
afforded

afforded ample scope for his enemies to work upon, and in which they were now beyond their hopes successful. Having learned that the duke of Savoy regretted the loss of Anselmo's counsel, and had it in contemplation to request his return to the official department then occupied by signior Rodolphus, they industriously circulated the most malevolent reports, to attach to their interest the remaining friends of the count, and even to join in the popular outcry, by having gone so far as to have pronounced him deeply concerned, and an abettor in the untimely end of the general, whom they firmly believed had been barbarously murdered.

A meeting of the nobles was accordingly held at the senate-house, to take this subject under their consideration, and to digest the most efficient means of proving the truth or fallaciousness of such a rumour. It was unanimously agreed by that assembly that they should
present

present a petition to their sovereign for that purpose; and further prayed that the body of the lamented Leontine de Montauban should be removed from Sardinia to Turin; and to mark the grateful sense of the people, for the services the general had so conspicuously rendered his country, to bestow on it a public funeral.

The prayer of the petition was granted by the duke of Savoy, and emissaries immediately sent off to Cagliari on the melancholy occasion: instructions had been likewise given to signior Rodolphus, to apprize his predecessor of the past occurrences, requiring (if the count intended to refute the charges brought against him) an immediate attendance in Savoy.

Rodolphus, then on the eve of returning into Tuscany, thought it most advisable, therefore, to communicate these instructions at a personal interview; the relation of which it was that
caused

caused the count such severe anguish, and actuated his sudden disappearance from the castle of Oldenzo.

On Anselmo's arrival at Turin, and on entering the gate of Port de Suzé, the town presented a scene of the utmost splendour. It was the day of Corpus Domini; a grand procession of the inhabitants, sumptuously attired, was then proceeding to the church, to celebrate the occasion, and to offer up their thanksgivings for the miracle.*

To

* The church of Corpus Domini is one of the best in Turin, the inside being entirely composed of the most beautiful marble, and adorned with precious relics, arising from the numerous donations which are continually presented to it. For the building of this sanctuary (tradition says) it was indebted to the following phenomenon:—In the year 1453, during a trifling war between the inhabitants of Suzé and the Dauphiness, a Piedmontese soldier stole out of a church, in the village of Isliglié, the host, in a silver stand, which he loaded, with other merchandize, on his mule: when he came to Turin,

the

To avoid observation, therefore, the count did not repair to his mansion (of which he still had possession) till midnight, but went to a house in the suburbs, belonging to one Lusignan, who had formerly acted as his secretary. Anselmo was received by him with much pleasure, and every accommodation offered to alleviate the fatigues of his journey. Lusignan was a man of strict integrity, of unshaken faith, and likewise possessed of great courage. During the late process against his patron, singly had he contended to plead in Anselmo's favour, to state the inconsistency of many

the animal rested at this spot, and its burden fell off; the stand then opened of itself, and the host came out, and rose instantly in the air, where it remained till the bishop, Louis Romagnano, followed by many of the clergy, arrived, and through their prayers, brought the host to enter into the chalice, or cup, which he held. To preserve the memory of which, they built a small chapel; and in the year 1607 it was altered by the devout inhabitants of Turin into a magnificent church.

many of their arguments; and concluded a very nervous harangue, by saying, that he would pledge his own life for the innocence of the count Anselmo. On the senators remonstrating at the unseasonable warmth with which Lusignan had spoken, he replied—"I pray you, my noble lords, to pardon the manner of my speech, having been attentive only to weigh the substance of it, to which I request your gracious consideration. I repeat," he continued, "and humbly submit to your lordships' calm reflection, the improbability of such a crime as that imputed to my noble patron. The count, although unknown to our beloved general de Montauban, was his most strenuous supporter. Is it possible, then, that my noble lords can draw an unfavourable inference from that circumstance, which at the time was so much applauded, and added another laurel to the many he has so justly fought for, and received from his grateful

support, and protection of each other. On this principle, man unites man of every country, sect, and opinion; and conciliates true friendship among those who might otherwise have remained at perpetual distance. Relief, my lords, is the next tenet of our profession: to relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on all men, but particularly on men who are all linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection. To sooth the unhappy, to sympathize with their misfortunes, to compassionate their miseries, and to restore peace to their troubled minds, is the grand aim we ought to have in view. On this basis we establish our friendship, and form our connexions."

So strong, however, was the prepossession of Anselmo's guilt in the minds of the people, that all argument inclining to favour the supposed culprit was rendered unavailing and nugatory. The populace had even gone so far as to pronounce

nounce Lusignan an accomplice in the foul deed ; and on his retiring from the senate-house, he was treated by them with marked indignation and insult ; notwithstanding which, being conscious of his innocence, he nobly withstood the torrent of clamour that was raised against himself, and likewise continued to exalt the character of his patron, and express abhorrence at their unjustifiable proceedings. Lusignan, therefore, acted up to the principle of equity he had so forcibly recommended to others ; and proved the only remaining friend of the count at this juncture. Faithfully did he now then relate to Anselmo every circumstance of this strange and unaccountable process ; and at the same time, respectfully offering his services to the count in any way that might be thought most useful. “ Yet, my lord,” continued the good old man, “ do not too hastily trust professions of friendship, nor reveal your thoughts too readily ;

for I fully agree in opinion with the wise son of Sirach, that 'false friends are always the most dangerous foes.' Pardon the boldness of my offering you advice," said Lusignan, "the presumptive manner, too, in which I tender it; having seen and thoroughly scanned the motives, the pursuits of mankind, in general, and by tracing the evil source from whence it springs, I have been enabled to steer clear of the vortex into which the greater part of the human race unthinkingly plunge themselves. The prevailing passion I allude to is pride, the false notion of attaining happiness by grandeur; their vanity, therefore, is insurmountable, and they spare no pains to arrive at this desired good, from an idea too often implanted in the youthful breast, that the rich and powerful are always gliding on a calm surface, and without they attain it likewise, their lives will be as a troubled sea, invaded by storms and tempests. I have

have found, by long experience, it is to that passion alone, therefore, from whence arises real misery in this world, and is the cause even of an imperfect belief of a future one; the gay and thoughtless can never be made sensible of their error until they feel the weight of it; they say, only point out to us one advantage obtained by an humble station, and we will follow it. To have truth announced to you, at all times, is ever salutary and beneficial in its effects, whereas, in prosperity, every thing appears under false colours of flattery and insidious friendship, where the baneful venom of envy is nurtured, and in the end, too often overthrows, by its hidden poison, the favourite of the fickle goddess."

This garrulity of the old man, in expressing his sentiments and opinions, was not displeasing to the count Anselmo, who, in acquiescing with the latter remarks, exclaimed—"Oh Almeria, to

thy fatal charms then am I indebted for all my misfortunes!"—"Think not so, my lord," replied Lusignan; "I trust many happy days will yet await on you; should fate, however, unfortunately doom it that your enemies shall sleep in security, and yourself fall a victim to their machinations, never, my lord, oh! never," continued the worthy secretary, "let your countess be acquainted with the unhappy cause of your downfall, for the agony of her mind, on reflecting on the circumstances which led to it, will drive her to madness!"

"How can I prevent the misery you so emphatically foretell, Lusignan?"—"Know you not, my lord," he replied to this question of the count, "that in the province of Umbria, near the town of Foligno, stands an uninhabited villa, formerly belonging to the ancient family of Thersilochus, and which was left to a nephew, who was shipwrecked,

some

some years ago, in his voyage to Algiers, where he was going to release, by ransom, a female captive, that had been taken by the Moors, a lady to whom it was supposed the young man was fondly attached? It has now devolved to a distant relative, who, not approving of the situation, has suffered the noble mansion to go into decay; and therefore an old peasant and his wife, whose cottage is contiguous, have been entrusted with the keys of the dwelling, with the power of disposing of the structure, should a purchaser be found for it.

“ This, my lord,” then continued Lussignan, “ I would advise you to fix on for the retreat of the countess Anselmo, until the period it may please Heaven to allow you to return with her in safety to Valleroy; nor should there be any time lost in carrying this scheme into execution; for to my certain knowledge,

ledge, the friends of the deceased general de Montauban have applied to the senate to separate Almeria from you by force, for the professed purpose of placing the countess in a convent for the rest of her life."

"Distraction!" exclaimed the now ungovernable Anselmo, on rising from his seat, and whilst pacing the room, with hurried and unequal steps, "may every torment light upon the wretches for so diabolical an invention! Tear from me my wife! the saint-like Almeria from the protecting arms of a husband! my brain's on fire! I can no longer bear to hear the accumulating insults which are preparing for me! Before to-morrow's dawn will I repair to the palace," continued Anselmo, with increasing fury, "then will I throw myself at the feet of my sovereign, state my wrongs, the cruelty of my enemies, unfold the designs of these men
of

of blood, and turn the sacred sword of justice to their own destruction!" A pause ensued after these wild exclamations of the count; Lusignan, however, remained silent. Anselmo then went on—"Is my honourable house, and the name of my noble ancestors, to be traduced by such miscreants? deluded vipers! love, they suppose, has made me a coward; a grovelling, mean-spirited coxcomb; afraid to meet the eye of a man; metamorphosed, perhaps, into a drivelling waiting-maid. They shall be, however, better acquainted with me," ejaculated Anselmo, with a convulsive laugh, "know me better; the flame of glory, although for some time dormant in my soul, is not extinguished; my single arm shall hurl them headlong from the height which they have so ignobly raised themselves, by consummate art and treachery unparalleled!"

In vain did Lusignan endeavour to
calm

calm those passionate tumultuous declarations of count Anselmo : all argument, however, was ineffectual, in the present unhappy state of his mind : this worthy man, therefore, who had only acted the part of a true friend, in tendering advice and giving information to Anselmo, that he might be enabled to counteract the designs of his enemies, foreseeing, now, that the least opposition would tend only to exasperate the already-agitated feelings of his patron, in the most respectful manner pleaded excuse for the unseasonable warmth in which he had spoken, and then left the apartment.

Some time after this elapsed before the count could sufficiently recover himself to receive Lusignan again into his presence. The hour for his departure drew near ; the pious votaries of Corpus Christi had all returned to their habitations, and excepting a few love-stricken youths, who were employed in serenading near the dwellings

dwelling of their mistresses, the city was perfectly tranquil, and free from interruption.

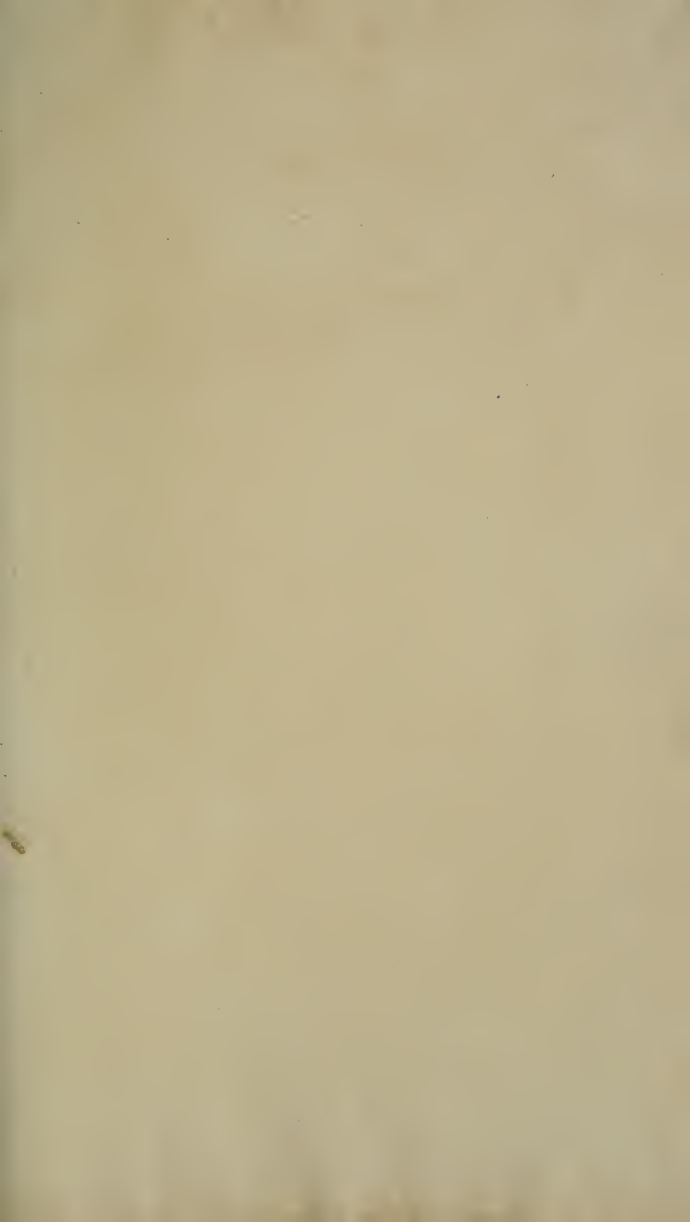
On a female servant appearing with more lights, and other refreshments, Anselmo ordered Lusignan to re-enter the chamber, and on his obeying it, said—“ Well, my good friend, I have not been unmindful of your sage advice; and to convince you of the truth of what I say, to-morrow I purpose sending instructions to my confidential steward to purchase the villa with all possible speed, and to prepare it for the reception of the countess Anselmo.”

“ I hope, my good lord,” he replied, “ that you will, in this instance, not be actuated by any suggestions, without calmly reflecting yourself on the propriety of such an expedient, which you will be more competent to judge of after an interview with our royal duke.”—“ I think with you,” said the count, “ and

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as the night is far advanced, will no longer trouble you; in the morning, however, I have to request your attendance on me to the palace;" which being assented to, Anselmo then took leave of Lusignan, and immediately departed.

END OF VOL. I.





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